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Arthur Letts, 1862-1923

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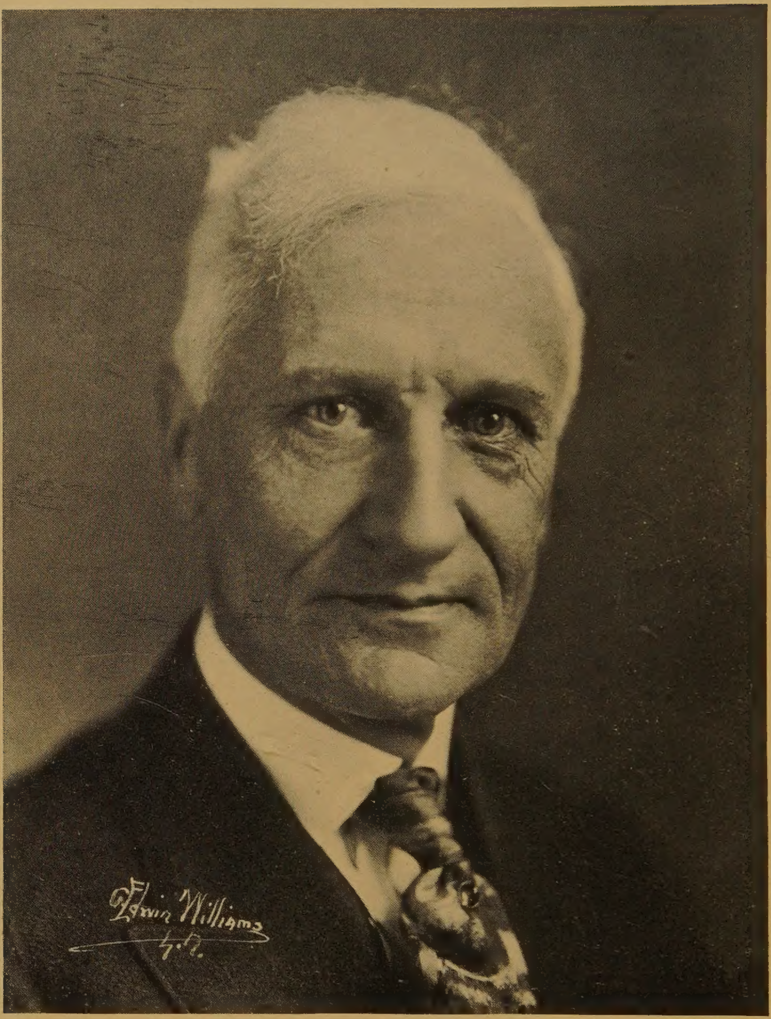
ARTHUR LETTS


Edwin Williams

ARTHUR LETTS

Photo G. Edwin Williams

Kilner, William H B
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ARTHUR LETTS

1862-1923

* * *

MAN AND MERCHANT
STEADFAST FRIEND
LOYAL EMPLOYER

* * *

He has left us
the legacy of his example
rich in lessons of
Initiative
Industry and
Integrity

· His Memory ·
GRAVEN IN OUR HEARTS
SHALL LIVE THROUGH THE AGES

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WRITTEN BY

WILLIAM H. B. KILNER

AS A TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF AN EMPLOYER

WHO WAS ALSO A FRIEND

OF MANY

THE BIOGRAPHY OF EVERY MAN
WHO WAS A SUCCESS
IS A GUIDEBOOK FOR THE YOUNG MAN
WHO IS SEEKING TO MAKE SOMETHING
OUT OF HIS OWN LIFE

ARTHUR LETTS, A BIOGRAPHY,
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Foreword

"Lives of great men oft remind us
We may make our lives sublime
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

MONUMENTS we build to our dead, and eulogies we weave with words, are seemly tributes; but the true memorial is a man's life and work and the tradition he has left, whether his career has been distinguished or unmarked.

Arthur Letts, by universal consent, was termed a great success. His climb to success is an epic of American opportunity, a pilot light to every ambitious boy; for what one man has done, another can do, and the rising generations may confidently look forward to even greater achievements.

What John Wanamaker represented to the merchants of the Eastern States and throughout the nation, Arthur Letts represented in a much similar manner in the Far West. He was recognized for his audaciousness in business; idealized because his vision penetrated years ahead of the times and he could be depended upon always to give the right decision in a crucial business project. But, as in most cases, his success was the result of mental exertion. It came slowly, by painstaking effort. His life is a fine example of what high ideals, united with courage, tenacity, ability and hard work, can accomplish even in what may sometimes be considered the unromantic realm of commerce.

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

The story of the rise of Arthur Letts is in many ways so wonderful that it sounds like a fairy tale—a modern fairy tale, to be sure, but one that is none the less remarkable because it is teeming with the ideas of a twentieth-century genie instead of the fancies of a fairy of the long ago. Buried under facts and figures there is a story of hopes and plans, of failures and of successes, of crucial experiences thrilling with human interest; but there is revealed enough to show the sturdy manhood, the sterling character and steadfast purpose of the man who wrought the great romance. It is a story of American manhood at its best, typical of the integrity, industry, courage, vision and perseverance upon which the big business of our country has been built.

An emigrant lad from England, Arthur Letts had but ten and a-half dollars in his pocket when he landed on the American continent. His departure from home had not been ceremonious. There had been no elaborate farewells. When he went aboard the boat, he mailed a letter home and told his folks that he was going. After eleven years of incessant toil, he celebrated his bankruptcy. He lost everything he had—was not merely "broke," but left with an indebtedness. With this load of debt on his shoulders, he had to start all over again.

Struggling for years to overcome conditions that seemed all but insurmountable, he displayed unbelievable pluck, vision, optimism and determination. He lived, and did, and worked and accomplished! His life became an inspiration to his friends. Even today, several years after Mr. Letts' death, when the directors of The Broadway Department Store come to a place where a decision seems difficult, somebody will be sure to ask: "What would Mr. Letts do?"—surely a rare tribute to the wisdom and acuteness of vision of their late President and an indication of the fact that character and personality persist. Managers and Directors, who knew him best, speak of him with reverence.

How all this came about, how such a man, with so many obstacles to overcome, was able to "make good"—the story possesses an interest and, for some perhaps, that value which, after all, is the only reason for any book.

Mr. Letts kept no diary and left no biographical memoranda. Consequently, it has taken much time to piece together the story of his life and his numerous activities; but if the shining record of accepted opportunities his life offers to any young man with initiative, energy, ability, integrity and determination, should engage responsive minds, and others be prompted to follow the valuable example of this man, without mention of whom any story of Pacific Coast merchandising would be incomplete, then the writer's efforts will have been well rewarded.

William H. B. Kilner

Los Angeles, California,
November 1, 1926.

ARTHUR LETTS
An Appreciation

Being an Editorial by SAMUEL T. CLOVER *in* SATURDAY NIGHT, *Los Angeles, May 26, 1923*

THAT mart of commerce which stands at the southwest corner of Fourth and Broadway, a memorial to the industry, sagacity and business prescience of the master-merchant who, last week, answered the call no one may deny, will continue to be the objective of thousands of persons daily, now as in the past, although the clean-cut, alert figure of the man responsible for its evolution shall no longer enter its portals. But who that knew Arthur Letts, the founder and inspiring genius of the colossal retail house that is even now expanding westward in new sectors, believes that the principles he engendered, the spirit of courtesy and fair-dealing he inculcated, have departed along with his corporeal frame? Our good deeds live after us; and they will be intangibly present in the aisles he once trod, so long as the great department house endures. His son, his trusted lieutenants, will carry on in the way he planned and the precepts he taught will continue to prevail; so that, while the body of Arthur Letts will, in due process, return to its original elements, the soul will steadily flame on in the business he founded.

What courage he had! And what vision! With him action followed quickly on conviction, and when others were still pondering and hesitating he moved swiftly to a conclusion. No man had to wait long on his decision. He grasped a proposition with lightning-like rapidity and his answer was almost as promptly rendered. Of course, he was not infallible; he was human, hence he stumbled at times. But, combined with rare good judgment, he possessed intuitions that were a powerful aid to right thinking and which gave him a notable percentage of advantage over less-keenly-endowed competitors. How many phases of life he touched, and how many avenues of endeavor he traversed! A good citizen, he did not neglect his civic duties, and his personal influence as well as his purse could always be counted upon in the support of men or measures needed to advance the interests of the community or to enhance its welfare. Whether it was clean politics or civic righteousness, the Y. M. C. A. work, the Boy Scouts, or Chamber of Commerce activities, Arthur Letts was not only ready to do his part, but he led others to right conclusions; he was never too busy in his private affairs to ignore the demands of the city he loved and of which he was so proud. Nor did he forget to look within; the welfare of his own establishment, the comfort of those in the big store, from the humblest worker to the department chief, was ever a source of inquiry; and, always, generous thoughtfulness marked his treatment of his subordinates. In the World War his patriotic spirit was evinced in his personal committee work and by his liberal contributions to the war sufferers in Belgium and France.

Outside his business Arthur Letts was a poet, expressed in terms of profound admiration for things artistic. It was the wonderful garden environing Holmby House on which he lavished his love for the beautiful in Nature. Out there in Hollywood he caused to be created such a growth of shrubs, trees and flowers as is seldom encountered. The roses he loved, the flowers he cultivated, the shrubbery and trees he planted, are mute but convincing evidences of his sensitive nature. He was a creator, but not alone of big business; the appeal of Nature was to him equally powerful, and the response as genuine and as earnest. His own person reflected the joy he had in things artistic; a dainty boutonniere that matched the soft tones of his neckwear, never garish, never flaunting, was an attractive feature of his daily exterior. He was, naturally, a positivist. No man who has had to fight his way to great success, unaided, is a pussyfooter; nor was Arthur Letts. But if his dislikes were, at times, profound, he never allowed them to embitter his life; he stressed the finer things and in them found solace and enjoyment. He was a just man, never permitting his prejudices to blind him to what was worthy in the one he could not admire.

Inscrutable are the ways of Providence! That

Arthur Letts, in his sixty-first year, at the apex of his mercantile success, when he had the leisure as well as the blessed inclination to revel in the beauties of Art and of Nature with which he had surrounded his home life, should be suddenly taken from them, is a puzzling circumstance. His arduous labors, his honest endeavors, surely, had earned respite and reward! But, who knows? It may be that he is today reveling in glories so far superior to what he was privileged to enjoy on this plane that his spirit is exulting in the transference. That is the thought his bereaved family may well take to itself by way of comfort and condolence. Not his the loss, but theirs. Yet, not theirs, either; for what a splendid heritage he has bequeathed, that his children's children shall be proud of far in excess of the more material reminders of his temporary sojourn here! As for the community at large it is inspired and uplifted by the aims and accomplishments of its long-time, honored fellow-citizen.

CHAPTER I

The Heritage of the Long Ago

CHAPTER I

THE HERITAGE OF THE LONG AGO

ARTHUR LETTS was born at Holdenby, an old-world village in Northamptonshire, England, on June 17, 1862; son of Richard and Caroline (Coleman) Letts. The history of the Letts family is of more than ordinary interest, dating back for many centuries—is so old, in fact, that it is logical to assume that it had its origin at a time when the Christian era was comparatively young.

After the recent World War, a new republic came into being. It is called Latvia, and is the home of the Letts. Its shoreline is washed by the Baltic Sea, and its eastern boundary is Soviet Russia. Lithuania and Poland lie to the south and Esthonia to the north.

These hardy, vigorous, determined and patriotic people won back their independence after having cherished it as a subject people for 700 years. Again and again had their country been conquered by stronger nations, but the Lettish people could not be dislodged from the land that had been theirs from time immemorial.

Latvia modestly claims to be 5000 years old. Undoubtedly the Letts have inhabited their land from a very early date, but inasmuch as folklore, superstitious rites, and Pagan ceremonies were more common than reading, writing or arithmetic, their remote beginnings are lost in a fog of legend.

In tracing back the family history of Arthur Letts, one is led to the conclusion that at some time in the distant past—perhaps in the seventh or eighth century—a family of Letts decided to go farther afield, maybe in search of a more peaceful land, maybe to plunder, or maybe because they were tired of the long, cold winters, and wished to get away from a climate that would discourage a Titan. Whatever their motives for leaving their homeland, their journey took them to the west—four hundred miles, by sea, to what is now Denmark.

Even here they were not contented. They must go still farther west; and so they journeyed to England in company with the Danes. At least, that is the assumption, as some of the older members of the present generation can recall discussions between their parents and grandparents, in which it was generally understood that the family came over from Denmark.

It was in 787 that the Danes had begun to make descents on the northeastern coast of England. These Danes or Norsemen were men of kindred race with the English. That probably explains why, at a later period, the Danes and the English coalesced so easily. In the meantime, however, it made their conflict all the more bitter and deadly. These Vikings began as rovers; then they became settlers and, lastly, conquerors.

When Alfred succeeded to the throne in 871, all England was pretty much at the mercy of the Danes. Whether England should continue to be ruled by Englishmen depended mainly on the skill and spirit of its young king.

Patiently he bided his time. One day he visited the Danish camp in the disguise of a harper. He saw the carelessness of the Danes, heard their plans discussed, and then, stealing from the camp, called his followers together. The English and the Danes met in battle—and the victory was Alfred's. The Danish leader and many of his followers agreed to become Christians, and solemnly vowed to retire to that part of England agreed upon, which was known as the Danelaw, or country of the Dane Folk.

Now, it so happens that the village of Holdenby, which has been known for some centuries as the home of the Letts family, is within twenty miles of the boundary line of the Danelaw, so it is quite possible that the family did come over with those early Vikings, and retained, for their family name, that of the country of their origin.

These Danes were an aggressive people; and a century later (1017) we find one of their number, Canute, acknowledged as King of England. He proved a wise and popular ruler, and it was really by him that all England was brought under one strong and lasting government.

Thirty years after the death of Canute, William of Normandy landed in England, and soon gained control of the country. William felt that the sword must guard what the sword had won, so he divided among his lords the lands of the conquered race. These lands were held by them on condition of military service being rendered in return. Thus there was introduced into England the feudal system, which continued to hold great power over English society during the succeeding four hundred years.

There is little doubt but that the Letts family played their part in these stirring times of history, for the attic of their home was cluttered up with swords and suits of ancient armour—just how old, no one seemed to know.

The old town of Northampton, from which Holdenby was but 7 miles distant, long had been a settlement of renown. In the year 900 it was one of the chief headquarters of the Saxons. It was one of the first towns where trial by jury was inaugurated. In 1185 the town was granted its charter by King Henry the Second. Affixed to the walls of the upper corridor of the present Town Hall are a number of shields, bearing the names of every mayor since R. Biddulph, 1377. Not one is missing. This is the town whither, for centuries, the Letts family came to dispose of their cattle and their produce, and to do their trading.

The first really *authentic* record we have of this family has been obtained from examining the wills that were filed for record, of which the earliest so far traced is dated 1510. Even so, that is a long time ago. Christopher Columbus, discoverer of the New World—e'en though an unsuccessful tutor in geography to royalty—had been dead only four years. Michelangelo was busy on the vaulting of the Sistine Chapel at Rome—the greatest painting he ever did. Cellini, who became famous as a sculptor and carver of gold and silver salt-cellars for the Holy See, was but a lad of ten. The ill-famed Borgias were in the height of their power, and Mary, Queen of Scots, yet unborn.

A century later, we come across some very interesting coincidences between the Letts family and the early history of America.

In the reign of Henry VII there came from a village in the north of England one Laurence Washington, who settled in the town of Northampton, where he soon obtained the influence and position which an active and acute mind is sure to achieve in times of social and political change.

He was a member of the Society of Gray's Inn, having been brought up there to the profession of the law; but, at

Sulgrave Manor—the Ancestral Home of George Washington

Bowling green in the garden of Sulgrave Manor

the instance and suggestion of his uncle, Sir Thomas Kitson, an enterprising and successful merchant of London, he turned his attention to the wool trade, which was rising rapidly then to great importance in the Midland Counties. Having settled, accordingly, in Northampton, he soon raised himself to so much consideration and influence that he twice became mayor of the town—first in 1532 and again in 1545. Occupying then an important local position, and being a friend to the principles and causes of the Reformation, it is not surprising that, on the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, he obtained a grant of the manor and lands of Sulgrave, together with other estates, which, till then, had belonged to the monastery of St. Andrew's, at Northampton. To Sulgrave he eventually retired; taking his place there—as did his son, Robert, and grandson, Laurence, after him—among the landed gentry of the county. The ill-fortune, however, which was supposed to cleave to the holders of alienated Church property, showed itself in the case of the Washingtons.

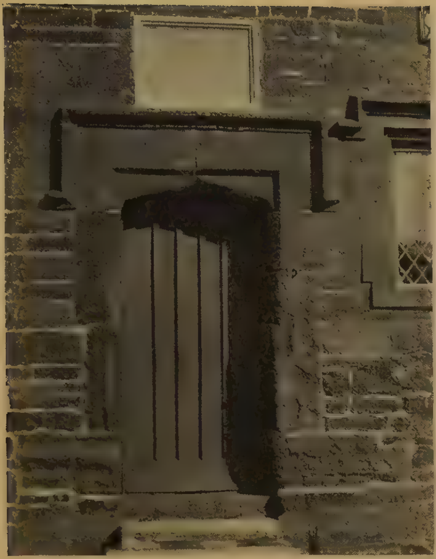
Before the fatal third generation had been surmounted, it became clear that they could not continue to live at Sulgrave Manor. The estate was disposed of, and Laurence Washington (the grandson), together with his young family moved to a house in the village of Little Brington, a scant mile from the Letts home at Holdenby. This house was quite unassuming, although it seems to have possessed more refinement in detail than other houses in the village. Their settlement in their new home was marked by the birth of another son who, scarcely surviving long enough to receive the name of Gregory, was buried in the churchyard of Brington. This melancholy beginning of their new life, together with the sense of their irreparable losses from a worldly point of view, suggested the inscription which they placed over the doorway of their humble home, just built for them:

> THE LORD GEVETH
> THE LORD TAKETH
> AWAY BLESSED BE THE
> NAME OF THE LORD
> CONSTRUCTA
> 1606

Laurence Washington became the father of no less than seventeen children. One of his sons, the Rev. Laurence Washington, at one time held a rich living near London. From this he was quite unjustly ejected for alleged misdemeanours—the charges being supported by the flimsiest of evidence—by the republican government of Cromwell. Some time later a tardy reparation seems to have been made to him, and he was given another church. He had several children, one of whom was the celebrated John Washington, born in 1634, who emigrated to Virginia in 1658 and became the great-grandfather of George Washington, the first President of the United States.

With less than a mile between the Washington home at Brington, and the Letts home at Holdenby; with no houses intervening, and a comparatively sparse population, it is more than a reasonable conclusion that the two families were not only well acquainted but, presumably, great friends.

On the tomb of Laurence Washington, the great-great-grandfather of the President, in Brington Church, is an epitaph and coat-of-arms. It is the Washington coat-of-arms: a shield ornamented with five alternate red and

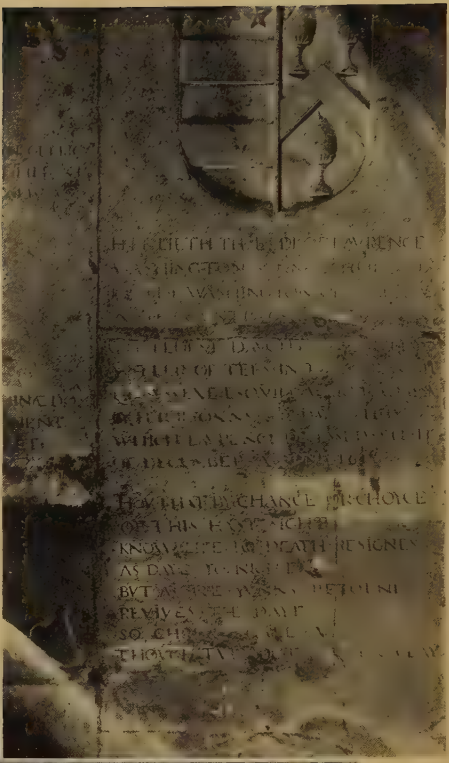


Inscribed stone placed over the doorway of his home by Laurence Washington, following the death of his son

The Lord Geveth
The Lord Taketh
Away Blessed Be The
Name Of The Lord
Constructa
1606

Home of Washington's ancestors at Little Brington

Brington Church, where Washington's ancestors are buried



The body of Laurence Washington is buried in Brington Church. Over the grave is a stone, upon the head of which is carved the Washington family coat of arms. The Stars and Stripes on the left half of this crest were, nearly two centuries later, chosen as the motif for the American Flag

Ancient tombs, near the grave of Laurence Washington in Brington Church white bars, and three white stars, representing the rowels of spurs in the days of chivalry. This same armorial bearing is also to be observed on a memorial brass to Elizabeth and Robert Washington (1622), in the same church. It is also carved over the entrance to Sulgrave Manor. How little did those peaceful country people think that a day was coming when this family coat-of-arms would provide the inspiration for the design of "Old Glory"—the Stars and Stripes of America!

There are many who cherish the delusion that the design of our Flag sprang, Minerva-like, full-grown into being, from the brain of the Father of his country, with some practical assistance from Dame Betsy Ross.

It is a matter of historical record that on the 14th of July, 1777, Congress resolved that the flag of the United States was to be thirteen stripes, alternately red and white, with thirteen white stars arranged in a circle on a blue field in the upper corner of the flag next the staff. This design was adopted on the recommendation of a committee composed of George Washington, Robert Morris, and Colonel George Ross, and it was the responsibility of these men to produce the first flag patterned after their design. This is where Colonel Ross's wife Betsy and her patchwork flag came into the picture.

Among the Letts family wills is one of Millicent Letts, who died at Flore in 1660. Flore is a small village some ten miles from Holdenby. In this picturesque little village is a tiny, thatched house with ancient lead-paned windows and yellow, plastered walls, known to the villagers as "Adams' Cottage". It was in this cottage that the Rev. Thomas Adams, A.M., Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, founded a Friends Meeting House.

His son, Henry, moved into Devonshire, and in 1635 emigrated to America, where he married. His great-grandson, John, became the second President of the United States. Records show that the Adams Cottage in Flore remained as a Quakers' chapel until 1781. The names of 35 Quakers (21 bearing the name of Adams) are recorded in the Friends Register of Northampton, and also in the Flore Church Register as being buried in the old-world garden attached to this cottage. The first to be buried here was Elizabeth Adams, who died January 30th, 1660, the same year that Millicent Letts passed away in the same village. With less than forty families living in the village, is it not reasonable to assume that the Adams family and the Letts family were also great friends?

Only a few miles from Flore is the village of Ecton, where the forebears of that other great American, Benjamin Franklin, lived and labored as blacksmiths and bell-founders. About this same period (1650) there flourished in Ecton, Thomas Franklin, a man of exceptional gifts. Although a blacksmith and bell-founder, he trained himself in the law, and became a prosperous legal luminary of some importance. Through rash speculation, however, he was subsequently reduced to poverty, and went to live with his second son, Josias. Prior to their emigration to America in 1682, the Franklins became Nonconformists.

Tradition says that they suffered persecution and were compelled to worship in secrecy. They had an English Bible concealed underneath an old joint-stool, to which it was firmly secured. During family worship the stool was reversed and rested on the knees of the officiating member of the family. Josias settled at Boston, where his son Benjamin was born—January 17, 1706.

It is surely a singular circumstance that the ancestors of these great Americans should have lived within walking distance of the Letts family home at Holdenby, a neighborhood that gave our great Republic its founder, George Washington; its Flag, the "Stars and Stripes"; Benjamin Franklin, its greatest philosopher; John Adams, the second President, and first Ambassador to England; while the mother of our greatest poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Mrs. Wadsworth), came from the nearby village of Long Buckby. Another famous son of this same county was Sir James Harrington, who was thrown into the Tower of London for several years in consequence of his republican views. It was his writings which furnished the basic concept of the Republic of America, subsequently realized by Washington, Adams and Franklin.

The homes of Shakespeare, John Bunyan, and William Cowper were less than thirty miles from Holdenby.

Before the seventeenth century was half over, this peaceful little village came violently into the limelight. Charles the First was king of England and was ruling with great tyranny. Although he had assented reluctantly to that second great charter of English liberty, the famous "Petition of Right" drawn up by the Commons—requiring the King to levy no taxes without consent of Parliament, to detain no one in prison without trial, and to billet no soldiers in private houses—early it was seen that he had no intention of keeping his promise. Parliament was dissolved, and in the Star Chamber men were sentenced to fine, imprisonment and even mutilation, for resisting the policy of the King. For eleven years (1629 to 1640) no Parliament was in session. Charles, eventually, was compelled to call another Parliament, and the Commons at once set themselves vigorously to the work of reversing the tyrannical Acts of the previous eleven years. They swept away all arbitrary tribunals, including the Star Chamber Court.

The breach between Parliament and the King rapidly widened, ending in a declaration of war—civil war. At first the Royalists were victorious, but after a struggle that lasted for three years the army of the Parliament, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, gained the upper hand, the decisive battle of the war being fought at Naseby, less than ten miles from Holdenby, on June 14th, 1645.

Five thousand prisoners, including 500 officers, were captured by Cromwell, to be marched to Northampton and thence on to London, to be afterwards dismissed or sent to the plantations.

The news of the victory was broadcasted by Cromwell's couriers, beacons flashed the news from hill to hill, and bells rang out merry peals in celebration of what Cromwell described as "the crowning mercy of Naseby."

Although there is no known written record, it is generally believed that members of the Letts family were fighting in the army of Cromwell. In fact, there is a tradition that one of them was personally thanked by the Protector for the valuable service he rendered. The district around Northampton was noted for the support it gave to Cromwell's cause. The town itself was prepared as though for a siege, and the Assembly of the town was so much against the King that it would not allow any of his trained soldiers to muster in the vicinity.

With the Parliament triumphant, it used its power to crush all who had formerly opposed it. The King later surrendered himself to the Scottish army and, in a manner that did not much exalt their character, was delivered by them to the English, who saw fit to keep him prisoner in Holdenby House, so near to the scene of his great defeat.

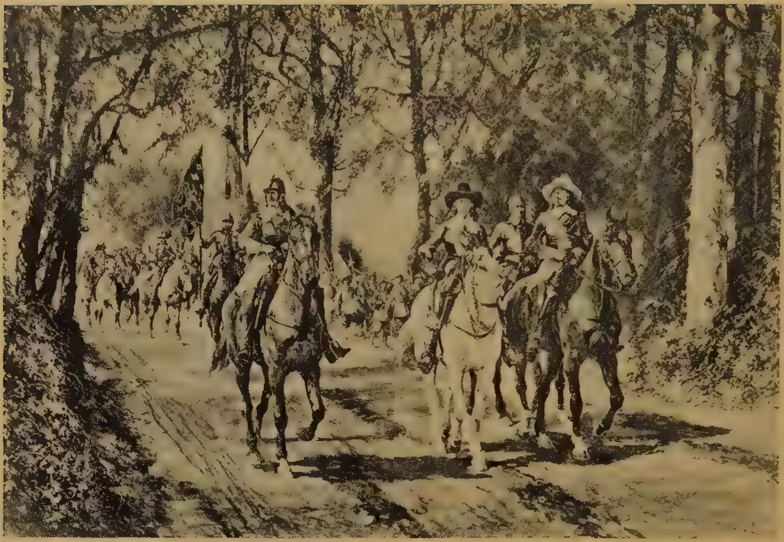
This fine Tudor mansion had been built by Sir Christopher Hatton, who seems to have been a nobleman of un-

The village of Little Brington, where Laurence Washington lived

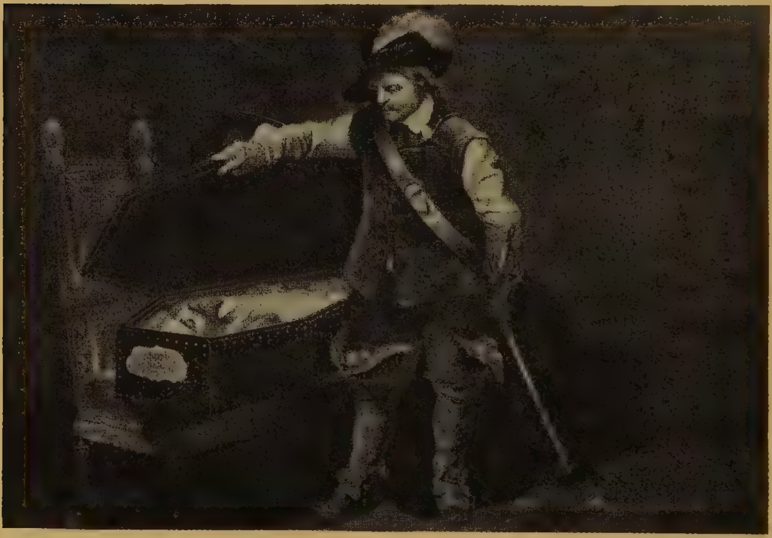
Brington. The village pump

Ecton, the ancestral home of Benjamin Franklin

The historical Quakers' meeting house at Flore, where the ancestors of President John Adams lived and are buried in the front garden



Charles I. on his way to Naseby. (*From a painting in Buckingham Palace.*)



Victor and Vanquished. "Cruel necessity!" Oliver Cromwell gazing on the body of King Charles doubted taste in architecture. The place was bright with many windows, which gave rise to the local proverb, "bright as Holdenby." It became in turn the rendezvous of Queen Elizabeth, and frequently a summer residence of James the First.

For nearly four months—from February 15th to June 3rd, 1647—King Charles was detained at Holdenby. Although a prisoner, he arrived in regal state. On his journey to Holdenby he had a guard of 900 horse and foot. At all the places through which he passed people flocked to greet him.

A contemporary writer has left it upon record:

"There were great triumphe at Northampton on Tuesday last, when the tydings were brought that His Majestye were neere Holmby, the bells rang and the great guns went off, insomuch that a gallant echo made its appeal at Holmby, and the sound thereof did much to rejoice His Majestye's Heart. So he entered the house in great triumphe and in a most sumptuous manner."

The Letts family home, Holdenby Lodge, was only half a mile distant from Holdenby House, the road to the great house passing by the Letts property; consequently the family saw much of the royal prisoner. At first he was allowed to live in almost royal state, and held levees of his adherents, who came from far and near to pay their respects to their Sovereign. Peasants cheered him as he walked or rode in the neighbourhood. Honest yeomen and sturdy farmers, who had ridden not so long ago in "buff and bandoliers" to the sound of his trumpets, sent in their humble offerings of rural produce to his household; and the gentry, flaunting in as much state as their reduced circumstances would allow, crowded in their coaches and on horseback to pay their last tribute of loyalty to a monarch in whose cause many of them had sacrificed all they loved best on earth. Never a day but what some of the Letts family stopped to chat with some courtier or country grandee making his way to Holdenby House. There seemed a never-ending procession of lumbering coaches. Notwithstanding their four horses driven in-hand, with a postillion and pair in front of these, they made but a slow five miles an hour, for the roads were rough and treacherous, and the coaches were invariably overloaded with attendant serving-men. Then, again, it was the King's custom to take rides and walks abroad under escort and play at bowls on the green at Althorp and other neighboring estates, many of these little journeys taking the monarch across the fields and meadows of the Letts farm.

It is said that Charles derived his greatest relaxation in a quiet game of chess. Whyte Melville pictures the reflections that must have obtruded themselves on the monarch's mind when the ivory king was reduced to his last straits, cooped up to the three or four squares which formed his only battle-ground—his queen gone, his bishops, knights, and castles all in the hands of the adversary, now checking him at every turn—and the issue of the contest too painfully like that catastrophe in real life which he *must* have seen advancing to meet him with giant strides.

Gradually his confinement became closer, and humiliations were heaped upon him. He was forced to forego the attendance of his loyal personal servants, and attempts were also made to force the Presbyterian religion upon him, his own chaplains being withdrawn. Amid all this persecution he behaved with such patience and dignity that even his guards were touched with pity and sympathy. He displayed a noble courage when Cromwell sent Cornet Joyce to "make himself master of the King's person."

Before the King would leave his room he demanded to know by whose authority he was being seized. The Cornet laughed rudely and pointed with his forefinger to his own person. "I demand, sir, as a right," said the King, "to be permitted a sight of your instructions."

"That is easily done," answered Joyce, "if your Majesty will take the trouble to step as far as this window."

And opening the casement, he pointed into the courtyard below, where indeed was drawn up as goodly a squadron of cavalry as the whole Parliamentary army could boast. They were the same material, some of them the same men, that had vanquished Charles at Naseby. The finest cavalry in the world and—bitterest thought of all—his own subjects. The King's heart was sore as he looked down into the court, but he had played the part of royalty too long not to know how to dissemble his feelings, and he turned to the Cornet with a smile as he said,

"Your instructions, sir, are in fair characters, and legible without spelling. The language, though somewhat forcible, is sufficiently intelligible, and admits of no further argument. I am ready to attend your good pleasure, with this proviso, that I stir not unless accompanied by the Commissioners. You have had your audience, sir; you may withdraw."

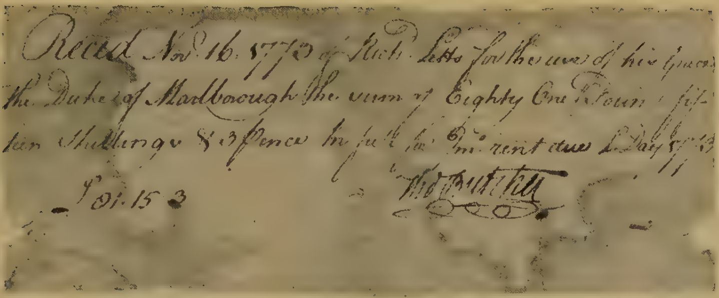
The Cornet, somewhat to his own surprise, found himself making a respectful obeisance and retiring forthwith; but the King's coach was ordered to be got in readiness without delay, and that very day Charles Stuart, accompanied, as he had stipulated, by the Commissioners, commenced the journey which led him, stage by stage, to his final resting-place—the fatal window at Whitehall, the scaffold and the block.

On that snowy morning in January, 1649, as the executioner held up the fallen head and shouted the words usual on such occasions, "Behold the head of a traitor," a loud groan of horror arose from the multitude, indicative of the revulsion that was to set in against the new regime. As the body lay in Whitehall, Cromwell is said to have visited it secretly at night, and gazing for some time upon the corpse in its coffin, muttered the words, "Cruel necessity."

Cromwell's power was now unquestioned. He stood out as the greatest man of his period, whether as a general or a statesman, whether as a ruler at home or as a negotiator with foreign powers; yet his rule was comparatively short-lived. Five years after Parliament created him Protector, his health broke down from the weary and incessant anxieties of political work; plots from abroad and at home surrounded him in his room and on the street. He had to carry pistols and to wear a shirt of mail under his clothes; and it is even said that he slept in a different room every night. And when his daughter fell ill, he watched for fourteen days by her bedside, "unable to attend to any public business whatever." Her death nearly broke his heart. A few days later a mighty storm of wind, tearing roofs from houses and levelling the largest trees in every forest, swept through the land. Four days later the storm broke out afresh, and in this terrible convulsion of nature the mighty spirit of Oliver Cromwell passed from the scenes of his earthly strife and labor.

England's one and only attempt at republican government was short-lived.

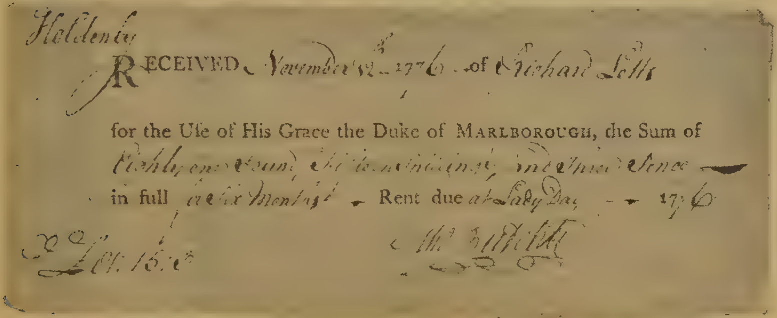
Two years later, upon the twelfth anniversary of the royal execution, the "Great Revenge," was enacted. It was kept as a solemn day of fasting and prayer, we are told in the words of an old historian, and he adds: "This morning the bodies of Cromwell and his two associates,



Recd Novr 16. 1773 of Richd Letts for the use of his Grace the Duke of Marlborough the sum of Eighty One Pounds fifteen Shillings & 3 pence in full for ½ yrs rent due L Day 1773

£81.15.3

1773—The Bookkeeper gives a receipt written in long hand



Holdenby

RECEIVED November 12 — 1776 — of Richard Letts

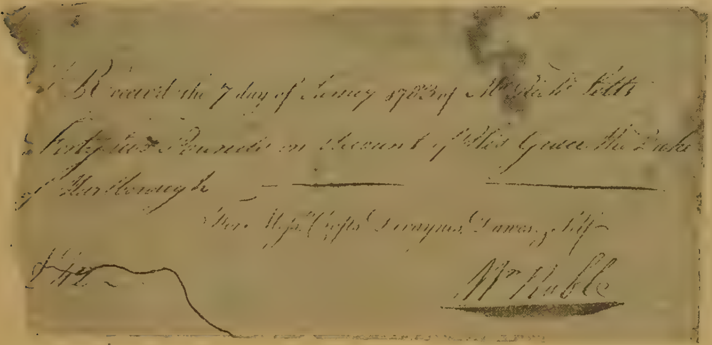
for the Uſe of His Grace the Duke of MARLBOROUGH, the Sum of

Eighty one Pounds fifteen Shillings and three Pence

in full for six Months — Rent due at Lady Day — 1776

£81.15.3

1776—A systematizer has been called in, and he has suggested the use of a printed receipt



Recd the 7 day of Jany 1783 of Mr Richd Letts Forty five Pounds on Account of His Grace the Duke of Marlborough

For [illegible] Dragoons [illegible]

£45

Wm Hubble

1783—The real estate agent now collects the rent

THE EVOLUTION OF A RENT RECEIPT

The village church at Holdenby, where the Letts family worshipped for many generations

Right. The ancient gateways that led to Holdenby House. They have been standing since 1583

The Letts Corner of the Churchyard. Here, for upwards of 400 years, the Richards of the family have followed each other in an unbroken succession

Bradshaw, and Ireton, were dragged from their tombs in Westminster Abbey, and drawn upon a sledge to Tyburn and then taken out of the coffins and in their shrouds hanged by the neck until the going down of the sun. They were then cut down, their heads taken off, and set up on poles on Westminster Hall, and their bodies buried in a grave under the gallows." The head of Cromwell was exposed for more than 20 years in Westminster Hall, and then disappeared.

With the departure of Charles from Holdenby, the little village once more settled down to the even tenor of its ways. The years came and went, leaving nothing but the memories of the fame the neighborhood had once enjoyed. New families came into the district, as old ones disintegrated and died out. But the Letts family stayed on. They were sturdy yeomen farmers, and loved the land they farmed even though they did not own it. A number of changes occurred in the ownership of the land, but the various owners were anxious to keep the Letts family as their tenants, so well did they care for the property. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, we find them paying their rent to Lord Chancellor Hatton. During the war of the American Revolution, the Duke of Marlborough was their landlord. A number of the old leases are still in the possession of the family.

Holdenby House and the adjoining lands had become the property of the great Duke of Marlborough in 1709. The third duke sold it to his son-in-law, Viscount Clifden, the ancestor of the lady whose home it is today.

From the earliest record we have, it seems to have been the custom of the Letts family to name the eldest son Richard, it being an unwritten law among themselves that the Richards should continue in possession of the farm.

And so, generation after generation, although many children were born, it was the Richards of the Letts family who farmed the land.

In the beautiful little stone church, not far from the farm, old and weather-stained with upwards of four hundred years of exposure to the elements, is a slab of stone above the grave of a Richard Letts who died in 1565. Surrounding it are the graves of the others who followed, and into each newly-made grave a Richard was laid who was the eldest son of his father.

In 1691 the old farmhouse was renovated and provided with a new roof. At one end of the building, near the gable, is a large stone upon which are carved the initials "R and E L," and the date "1691," the inference being that Richard and Elizabeth Letts themselves assumed the cost of the restoration. It is quite probable that a number of the new stones built into the walls were obtained from the great Holdenby House, part of which had been dismantled a few years previously.

Unfortunately, the registers of Holdenby Church, prior to 1754, have been lost or destroyed; which makes it difficult to trace the family beyond this point with any degree of continuity.

The oldest remaining book of churchwardens' accounts at present in possession of the Rector is for the year 1730, and in it the signature of Richard Letts occurs a number of times.

In 1792, the year in which France was declared a Republic, and the year in which the United States Mint was established, Richard Letts, the grandfather of Arthur Letts, was born. He was married to Ann Jennings of Ravensthorpe on June 27th, 1825. Of this union there were five sons—Richard, John, Thomas, James, and William. Ann

Jennings was a very godly woman, very industrious, and made a splendid mother to her five sons; and they, in turn, were much devoted to her. Every Sabbath morning the father took his five sons and their mother to Creaton Church, for he preferred the service there to the one at Holdenby. The fact that it necessitated a walk of three and one-half miles in each direction, was a matter of little or no consideration. Upon their return home, dinner was ready, after which the father had his five sons around the dining room table, where he read one of John Wesley's sermons and explained it to them. He was a farmer of no mean ability and for many years devoted much of his time to the handling of cattle.

Neighboring farmers greatly admired him for his rugged honesty and just business uprightness, and invariably entrusted him with their own cattle, so that he took large droves to the famous Smithfield Market in London, where he sold them.

It was about this time that George Stephenson invented the locomotive, and Richard Letts took quite an interest in the progress of railway construction, so much so that he was invited to ride in the first train that ran to London. This was in 1837, just 12 years after the first train in the world's history had run from Stockton to Darlington in Yorkshire, preceded by a bellman on horseback carrying a red flag of warning.

Richard Letts clearly foresaw the great future that was to open up for the "Iron Horse," and, in spite of much local ridicule, invested money in the new enterprise. In those days a locomotive was something curious to behold. The passenger cars were open to the weather, the passengers sitting back to back on a rough wooden bench; and the rails were supported on blocks of stone.

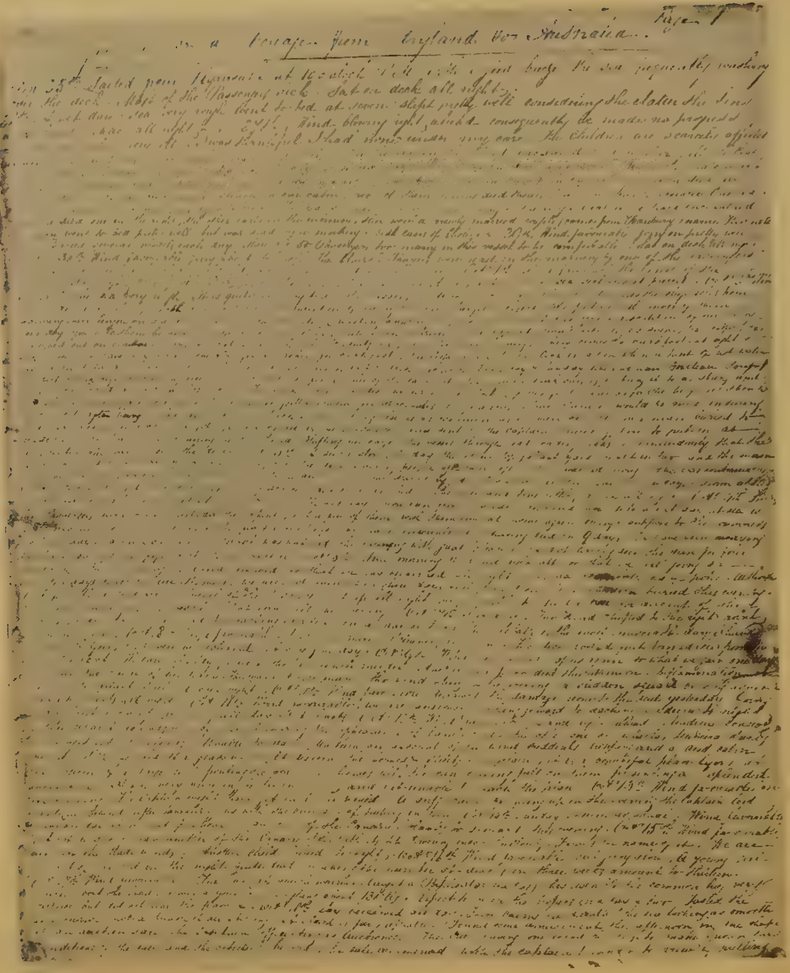
The grandfather of Arthur Letts was a fine-looking man, over six feet tall, and had a vigorous constitution. The only time a doctor ever called upon him was when an old, angry gander had broken his arm with its wing. He had received an excellent education and there was no topic he could not converse upon. He was invariably dressed in drab breeches and gaiters of black broadcloth, black silk necktie, tall silk hat and brown kid gloves, the fashion of that day. A typical gentleman of the old school, he preserved an old-world courtesy and charm, although very strict with his family, especially on being truthful and straightforward. A severe punishment awaited the transgressor of those virtues. He lived to be 78 years of age, hale and hearty practically to the last.

Our story must now follow the eldest son Richard, who was born on May 5th, 1826. Of his four brothers, John founded a firm of law stationers in London and was the father of sixteen children. Thomas, who became London manager for Dent Allcroft & Co., the famous glove manufacturers, had six children and was 85 years old when he died. James, who lived to be 79, had eleven children. He had a varied career as a journalist, and later as a merchant in Leicester. William, the younger brother, rose to prominence in the city of Birmingham. He became the owner of two hotels, two grocery stores and a hardware business. Unfortunately, he met with an accident while driving, and lost his life at forty-five years of age. He had nine children.

Richard made most excellent progress with his studies at school, and as a reward his father gave him a trip to Australia, with the privilege of staying there a year or more. He sailed from Plymouth on September 25th, 1849, and landed at Adelaide on January 11th, 1850. He sent home

Above—"Puffing Billy"—the locomotive that drew the first train to London (1837) in which rode Richard Letts. Built by George Stephenson, the "Father" of railways, in 1830. —*Photopress, London*

Below—How the "Iron Road" was first laid. The rails of the earliest railroads were supported on blocks of stone.—*Photo by Northern Echo, Darlington*



First page of letter written by Arthur Letts' father, in 1849, telling of his voyage to Australia. Remarkable for its fine handwriting a most interesting account of the voyage, his penmanship being of a quality rarely seen now-a-days. On the small sheets of paper, 7 inches by 9, there is an average of 1500 words to a page, every letter of which is perfectly formed, and as easily read as though it were printed. Following are some of the observations made by this lad of 23 on his first voyage of adventure:

Sept. 25th, 1849. Sailed from Plymouth at 10 o'clock P.M. with a good breeze, the sea frequently washing over the deck. Most of the passengers sick. Sat on deck all night.

Sept. 27th. Wind blowing right ahead consequently we made no progress. The women looking very ill. I was *thankful* I had none under my care. The children are scarcely affected at all with the continual rocking of the vessel. In the evening the wind increased to a regular gale so that we were obliged to draw in sail and let her drift, the sea washing right over the deck and rushing down the hatchways. Three of the passengers died today, casting quite a damper over us. They were buried in the evening. Sat on deck all night on account of the disagreeable stench in our cabin, two of them having died there. They were cases of Asiatic Cholera.

Sept. 28th. Sea smoother but wind still right ahead. The sea sickness is very severe owing to the rough weather we have encountered. Two more died, one in the night—the other early in the morning. They were a newly married couple. The man went to bed pretty well, but was dead before morning, both cases of Cholera.

Sunday, 30th. Wind favourable, going about 6 knots. The Church Prayers were read in the morning by one of the passengers. I thought it a miserable affair. I could scarcely believe it was Sunday.

Oct. 2nd. I will give you a description of our living for one day, you will then be able to judge for all as we have not much variety. The different small articles, as sugar, tea, coffee, etc., are weighed out on certain days to last for a week. The biscuits are given out every morning—then comes the breakfast at eight o'clock, those who have any ham generally get a rasher for breakfast. The coffee is taken to the cook in a can, and a pint of hot water is poured on it for each man. Then comes the dinner—either beef or pork (except on Thursday and

Sunday when we have soup). The beef and pork requires soaking before it is cooked, in order to fetch some of the salt out. The way we soak ours is by tying it to a string and towing it overboard for a couple of hours. The soup is the best dish we have, the pork is pretty good, but as for the beef, I think it might be manufactured so as to supersede gutta percha for shoe soles, its qualities in my opinion would be more enduring. It comes out after being boiled, as hard as a brick. Everything else is as common as it can be. Another man buried tonight. A memorial has been signed by the passengers and sent to the captain requesting him to put in at Madeira for the purpose of cleaning the ship and shifting her cargo, the vessel through bad loading rocks so tremendously that the sea is continually washing over the decks.

Oct. 3rd. A severe storm today. The main top gallant yard snapt in two and the main top gallant sail blown away, the sea rolling over the deck washing people off their legs as they walked along. During the storm an empty boat drifted by us. We are now in the Bay of Biscay.

Oct. 4th. A miserably wet day. You can form no idea on land how dull a wet day at sea is. The passengers seem to have lost all their spirits, not a few of them wish themselves at home again owing I suppose to the roughness of the weather we have had, and the fearful mortality we have encountered, 7 having died in 9 days. We have been swaying about all day in a dead calm. The sunset was watched this evening with great pleasure, we not having seen the sun for four days owing to the foggy state of the weather.

Oct. 8th. Wind favourable. Busy this morning cleaning my gun. The deck looked quite formidable from the number of guns that were being cleaned. A very fine day.

Oct. 13th. A soft breeze springing up in the evening, the captain left Madeira behind after tantalizing us with the promise of putting in there.

Oct. 16th. Wind favourable but going slow. A young girl fell out of her bed in the night quite dead, making the number of deaths in three weeks amount to thirteen.

Oct. 17th. The sun gets much warmer. Caught a porpoise (or sea hog) they resemble the common hog very much about the head; it was a young one weighing about 130 lbs. Expect to be in the tropics in a day or two. Tasted the Porpoise but did not like the flavour.

Oct. 26th. About one o'clock this morning a storm came on accompanied with thunder and lightning, the rain descending in torrents. Several of us were sleeping with our beds on deck. It was fine fun to see with what precipitation we took our beds up (not to walk) but run. The jib and flying jib were blown away, the storm continued about five hours. Several swallows and butterflies too were flying about the vessel in the afternoon. Those little things create quite an interest amongst us. Caught a young shark this afternoon.

Oct. 27th. Was able to get at my large box today for the first time since I have been on board. I found the apples nearly all spoilt. They are very valuable here. They ought to have been packed in a hamper with layers of straw between them. I drank a glass or two of wine after dinner to the health of those dear friends I left behind. Tasted the shark today, if it had not been a shark I could have eaten it.

Oct. 28th. Sunday. Caught some swallows today by holding out to them a fly, they would alight on your hand and peck it off (the fly I mean of course not the hand). I often fancy I see you on a Sabbath evening walking down that lane from Church. Prayers as usual.

Oct. 31st. This is the third day we have been stationary. These tropical calms are detestable. Our water stinks horribly. I bought some effervescing lemonade powders which I find very useful now in taking the taste off the water.

Nov. 1st. Still becalmed, the vessel rolled very much last night on account of a heavy swell on the sea. The weather being very hot, the married people slept on deck, and turned us out of our place.

Nov. 3rd. Going steadily all night but not in the right course, sailing S.W. instead of S.E. Saw five vessels this morning. We were admiring the sunset this evening. You can form no idea of the beauty and grandeur of a tropical sunset. As the sun disappeared, in a short time the moon arose like a ball of fire out of this water world by which we are surrounded.

Nov. 8th. An auction sale today of the perishable articles belonging to some of the deceased passengers. They made more than their market value, by 40 per cent. I disapprove altogether of their being sold. I don't see what right the Captain has to sell them, although the money will be delivered to their friends.

Nov. 16th. Wind fell considerably this morning. In the evening it freshened up. You cannot imagine the feelings of pleasure with which we hail any clouds that indicate wind, the stronger it blows so much the better are we pleased. The sea is looking splendid, the waves rushing to and fro tipped with foam, our gallant bark cutting through them and dashing the spray and foam in all directions. We are now just about opposite St. Helena, that island lying to windward of us.

Dec. 5th. Made complaints to the Captain about the soup, of which we have not had our share. Having been cheated of 300 lbs. of fresh meat (or soup) we insisted upon having it made up, which the Captain promised should be done. Whenever the Captain or Doctor were within hearing we commenced asking each other questions about the medical comforts etc, so talking at them this had the desired effect, we were soon informed that if we applied to the steward in case of illness, those medical comforts would be given gratuitously. This was after 17 passengers had died, several of whom in all human probability would have been alive now, with proper attention and a share of those comforts that were denied them. This is the general opinion on board.

Dec. 24th. Another child died today. Christmas Eve was spent socially in drinking coffee and smoking cigars. Sat up until 12 to wake the sleepers to wish them a Merry Xmas.

Dec. 29th. Blowing a stiff breeze. Lower studding sail and fore topmast studding sail carried away, the sea roaring and foaming as though Vulcan with all his fires was underneath. To attempt a description of the grandeur of the scene would be folly. Since yesterday we have run 216 miles, we are 93 E. L. having only 2000 miles to run, then Hurrah for Adelaide.

Dec. 31st. The new year was ushered in by the most tremendous shouts I ever heard of. A happy new year—everybody was wishing everybody else a happy new year, the bell began to ring and the music to play, the music being extracted from two copper lids being rattled one against the other. After wishing all friends at home a happy new year and singing God Save the Queen, we retired to rest.

Jan. 1st, 1850. A fine breeze, but with too much rolling about to be agreeable. There was a fire in the hold today, occasioned by a lighted lamp being held over a water cask just opened. The foul air escaping and coming in contact with the lighted lamp burned for a few minutes. There was no danger. The quantity of foul air not being sufficient to cause any accident.

Jan. 4th. Wind favorable. We are 118 E. L. the latitude the same for the past week (about 40). The crew are busy cleaning the decks of all superfluous articles previous to landing. We are anticipating having a glass of ale and some fresh provisions in Adelaide this day week.

Jan. 9th. Wind strong and favourable with occasional squalls. We expect to see land sometime in the night.

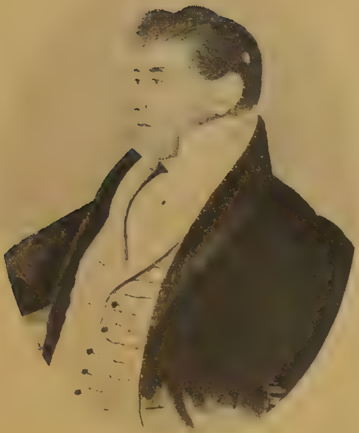
Jan. 10th. A beautiful breeze. Myself and four or five others sat up all night to look for land. Feeling somewhat hungry towards the middle of the night, we lighted the fire and began frying pancakes and making coffee, which was difficult as the sea occasionally washed over the ship and gave the fire a ducking. Saw Kangaroo Island this morning about five o'clock. It is about 90 or 100 miles from Adelaide. We continued running along the coast. About the middle of the day Australia was discernible in the distance. We are now anxiously looking for the light-ship.

Jan. 11th. Favourable wind. Saw the light ship this morning. Our signals were hoisted for a pilot and in about an hour we had one on board. What a treat it was to have a look at fresh faces, such a rushing to the sides of the vessel. We were obliged to lay-to until the tide came up, there not being a sufficient depth of water over the bar to admit of the passage of our ship. When the tide was up, the vessel raked the bottom very much. As soon as we were in sight of the port, a steam tug came up, we hooked to, and away she went with us down the river, and rested not until we were placed as near the wharf as the other ships would admit of. A person, to fully sympathise with us at that time, must have been placed in similar circumstances. I can truly say it was with feelings of great pleasure I leaped out of our vessel, across two or three others and into the yard, and had very soon rambled over the port. Most of the houses there are wooden ones raised on four posts about a yard from the ground. Thus ended my first trip across the mighty deep. I hope my next voyage will conduct me in safety to the presence of dear (now doubly dear) friends at Home.

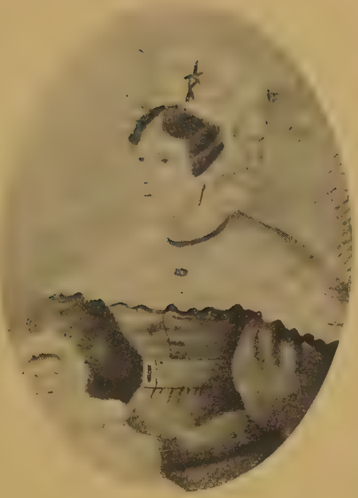
In a covering letter to his parents which accompanied the diary of his journey, Richard made many interesting comments upon life as he found it in Australia. He thought that a few years would see Australia an independent colony. He could not understand how men in Downing Street could imagine they knew best how to govern a country nearly fifteen thousand miles away. He made apologies for any grammatical errors, and that there were no hairbreadth escapes from shipwreck, no dreadful encounters with sharks, no danger of being overturned by a whale, etc.; but he felt that a reflective mind would see that there was danger, and of a serious nature, particularly at the commencement of the voyage; and, thanks to a kind Providence, he was carried through in safety.

Later, he adds: "Give my best regards to Mr. Coleman. In my day-dreams I often see Mrs. Coleman and Mother walking together and talking earnestly, without a doubt planning something that shall prove beneficial to their fellow creatures. I often see you too, Carrie, skipping down the garden as full of fun as ever, but I suppose by the time I see you again, you will be older. Goodnight now. The bothering mosquitoes are buzzing about again. They bite terribly bad."

Two years spent in Australia proved sufficient to convince Richard that he preferred Old England, so he returned to the homeland, assumed the management of the farm in accordance with family tradition, and led to the altar the "Carrie" of his dreams—Caroline Coleman, the only daughter of William Coleman of Chapel Brampton, a well-to-do manufacturer of farming implements. This young lady was considered the prettiest girl in the county,



William Coleman
of Chapel Brampton
The father of Arthur Letts' mother.
From a painting, 1840



The wife of William Coleman, with her baby, Caroline, who became the mother of Arthur Letts. From a painting, 1836

Richard and Caroline Letts
From photographs taken shortly after their wedding, 1855

and was often embarrassed by the attention she attracted. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing her in after years, will always remember her as one of the most charming and gracious women who ever lived, for such was the mother of Arthur Letts. Ten children were born to this couple—Annie, Richard, George Frederick, Arthur, Francis Coleman, Flora Edith, Louis, Ernest Alfred, Ada Caroline, and Mabel Grace; six sons and four daughters.

CHAPTER II

The Early Years

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THE EARLY YEARS

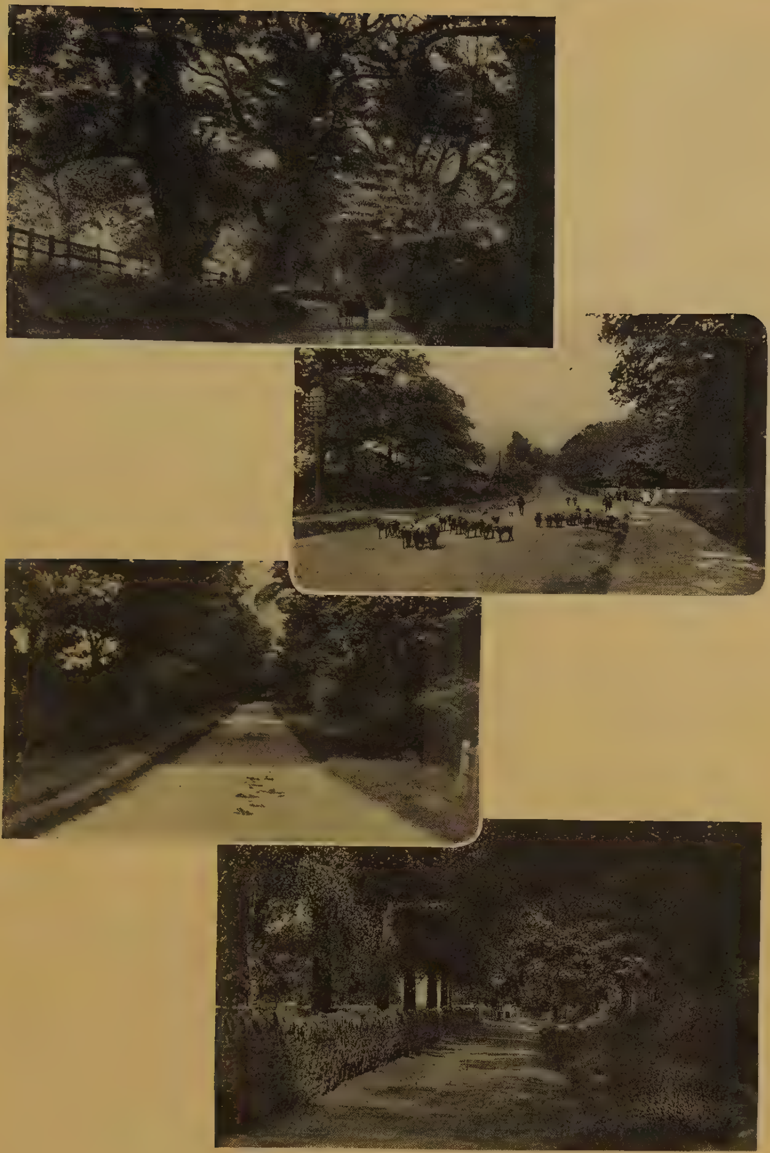
ON ONE of the fairest sites in the whole fair county of Northampton stands Holdenby Lodge, the Letts family home. It offers a succession of the richest and most pastoral views which this rich and pastoral county affords. Valley after valley of sunny meadows, dotted with oak and elm and other noble trees, undulate in ceaseless variety far as the eye can reach; while deep, dark copses and thick, luxuriant hedgerows, bright and fragrant with wild flowers and astir with the glad song of birds, diversify the foreground and blend the distance into a mass of woodland beauty.

It was the seventeenth day of June, and the hour was after noon. The home field was ablaze with the gold of buttercup and turquoise of harebells. Swarms of insects quivered in the still, warm air; the note of the thrush and blackbird, hushed during the blaze of noon, was awakening once more from tangle of hedgerow, leafy coppice and deep woodland dell. A light cloud of smoke floated above the spot where lies fair Northampton town, but the intervening trees and hedgerows were so clothed in foliage that scarce a building could be discerned, though the tall, sharp spire of Kingsthorpe Church pierced upward into the sky. And over all, the English sunshine, pale as an alloy of gold and silver; not too dazzling, yet discreetly cheerful.

It was into this scene of peace, prosperity and repose that the boy Arthur came on this glorious June afternoon in 1862.

Let us take a closer look at this old house, so deeply immersed in historic atmosphere. The outer walls are built of large blocks of white and red sandstone, and are nowhere less than fourteen inches thick. In the west end wall there are four large windows, with a center division of round stone. No longer do they admit light, however, for untold years ago they were sealed with large blocks of stone in order to avoid the payment of a high tax at that time levied on windows. In this end gable is the large stone, 3 feet by 2 feet, bearing the date 1691 and the letters R and E L, indicating the year when the house was renovated by the Richard Letts who was living here when William Penn founded Philadelphia. The roof of the house is of Welsh blue slate, and goodly portions of the walls are covered with ivy.

Inside are some twelve rooms. The hand-hewn beams across the ceilings have been cased in and mouldings attached, in order to make the house look more "stylish." Originally, there were three large open-hearth fireplaces, but coal grates have been installed recently, and the huge openings built-in with marble casings and mantels. When it was necessary to clean the kitchen chimney, a large bundle of thorny bushes, fastened together with a rope, was carried to the roof and wedged into the top of the chimney, the end of the rope being dropped down the chimney. A horse was then brought into the kitchen, and



ROADS THAT LEAD TO HOLDENBY

Holdenby Lodge, the Letts family home for several centuries

The South Gable, showing walled up windows and stone near top, with letters R. and E. L. 1691

Holdenby Lodge, the yard

the end of the rope hitched-up. As the horse was led out of the house, he pulled the rope with the bushes attached down the chimney, and all accumulations of soot had to give way. This somewhat crude but efficient method of cleaning was abandoned after the more modern coal grates had been installed.

All the floors on the ground level are of stone, cut in large blocks. In each room there is an old-fashioned bell-pull, with the battery of bells hung in the kitchen. Not the least interesting room is the "brew house;" for in those days each farmer brewed his own ale. This room is equipped with two large brewery kettles, together capable of holding 250 gallons. Brewing takes place twice a year, in March and October, some 600 gallons being brewed on each occasion: for beer was then consumed much as tea and coffee are now-a-days, and it was necessary for farmers to supply their hired help with this beverage. Brewing the ale is a messy job. Furniture has to be covered up and the nicer things put away, for the steam permeates the entire house. Brewing kettles have to be emptied by hand, and the beer carried in pails to the cellar, where it is stored in huge barrels standing 7 feet high. In a separate cellar is stored the wine—cowslip, orange, ginger, raisin, elderberry, etc.; all of it home made; barrels of it.

Another room is known as the dairy. Here the fresh milk is brought and poured into large shallow trays made of lead or stone. When the cream has risen, it is removed by skimming the surface lightly with a large perforated ladle, the perforations permitting the surplus milk to run off. The milk that remains is fed to the hogs, and the cream churned into butter. Hanging from the kitchen ceiling are a number of hams. The farm furnished a bountiful supply of lamb and pork and poultry. Hogs were killed at regular intervals, and after the hams and sides were properly cured, they were transferred to the attic. Here we find hanging numerous flitches of bacon and other choice hams. An adjoining attic is devoted to the storage of apples, while a third contains a pile of old swords and armour, that one ponders over in deep thought, wishing these could tell of the adventures of long ago.

There is no plumbing in this old house, except for a pump near the kitchen sink that furnishes water for cleaning purposes. Drinking water comes from a pump in the outer yard, and is carried into the house in pails. In the dining room is an oil lamp, although the method of illumination most frequently used at night is by candles or rush-light. The rush-lights are made from the reeds that grow in the streams. These reeds are gathered, dried, and rolled in tallow. When properly made, they will burn all night. Such is the home of the Letts family, at the time Abraham Lincoln is President of the United States.

All bread is home made, but white flour is unknown. At each harvest time, sufficient wheat is taken to the village mill and there ground into flour, to last the family and their help for another year. Whole-wheat flour is used in all cooking. Sugar comes in high cones and has to be cut into pieces with pincers and broken for table use.

We must not overlook the garden, for it is a joy to behold: one of those typical old-world gardens enclosed by a brick wall some five or six feet high. In the middle of the garden is a large flower-bed, with a tall araucaria tree in the center. The gravel walks are bordered with low, boxwood hedges, neatly trimmed, and planted at intervals with standard roses. Massed against the walls are clumps of hollyhocks and foxgloves, while the flower-beds are a tangle of forget-me-nots, fuchsias, old-fashioned pinks and sweet lavender. The vegetable garden, so excellently cared for, covers half-an-acre of ground, and in the adjoining orchard are all kinds of fruit, both large and small.

The outbuildings are large and spacious, built of stone or brick, with slate or tiled roof. There is stabling capacity for approximately 100 head of cattle, horses and young stock, together with accommodation for about 175 sheep. There are two large barns for storing grain, and a large stack-yard for the stacking of hay. The hay stacks are set up on stone pillars, which serve as foundations, and the tops of the stacks are thatched with straw, in order that the hay may be preserved until such time as it is required.

The Letts holdings covered an area of 263 acres, and constituted a well-sustained unit; in many respects an ideal home for a boy to grow up to manhood; surroundings that could not fail to leave an indelible impression upon *any* child.

From early childhood, the boys chummed together in pairs. Richard and Fred, and Arthur and Francis were inseparable. When they were small they were looked after by a nursemaid, who took them for their daily rambles through the fields and meadows, where they revelled amongst the bright wild-flowers of the lovely countryside.

As a child, Arthur was very fond of flowers and, when quite a little fellow, removed the flowers from a very expensive new bonnet of his mother. When his mother discovered what he had done, his sole explanation was that he loved flowers, and that was why he pulled them off. At the age of seven, Arthur was sent to the village school, conducted by the Rev. Mr. Hedges, which school he attended for four years.

> *"There, in his mansion, skill'd to rule,*
> *The village master taught his little school;*
> *A man severe he was, and stern to view;*
> *I knew him well, and every truant knew;*
> *Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace*
> *The day's disasters in his morning face;*
> *Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee*
> *At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;*
> *Full well the busy whisper, circling round,*
> *Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd;*
> *Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,*
> *The love he bore to learning was in fault;*
> *The village all declared how much he knew;*
> *'Twas certain he could write and cypher, too.*
> *Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage;*
> *And e'en the story ran, that he could gauge."*

When he was eleven, Arthur was transferred to Creaton Grammar School. This necessitated a walk of three and a-half miles in each direction. However, the road to school led through a beautiful country, and the walk was always enjoyable whatever the weather. Even in winter the grass fields and the grass along the hedges remained green, and it was not often that snow stayed upon the ground for more than a few days at a time. The roads were always firm underfoot, for they were hard-surfaced. Not so many years previously a Scotchman by the name of MacAdam had invented a process of roadmaking which consisted in depositing layers of small, crushed stones till they offered a hard, smooth surface suitable for traffic. This process was now being generally adopted, with the result that through the long, rainy winters the highways and lanes that led out from them were always hard and

Favorites

At the Smithy, taking off the old shoe

Taking Sheep to Market (Winter)

A drink at the brook

FARM LIFE AT HOLDENBY

Cutting the grain

The Pasture in Spring

Loading up the Harvest

Tea Time

BOYHOOD MEMORIES

firm. It is doubtful if a road could be more fascinating than this road to school, the same road over which came those processions of courtiers, glittering with gold and glossy with velvets, when Charles held his receptions at Holdenby House. All the turns of the seasons were delightful. When the Spring flowers came, and the hawthorn hedges bloomed, and the cherry trees were white with blossoms—

"When daisies pied, and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight"—

it was then the boys could scarcely wait to set off in the morning for school. Arthur was always an early riser, and often he would be at school by 8 or 8:30 A.M.; except, perhaps, on those glorious Spring mornings when he stopped along the wayside to gather yellow primroses and violets, flowers of much deeper color than those that grow in countries where the air is less saturated with moisture. If his brothers were not ready to leave with him, Arthur would start off alone, so that he might be at school in good time.

In the Summer time the hedgerows that border the roadsides were a riot of color, the various flowers fighting sportively for supremacy—the convolvulus pretending to throttle the honeysuckle, and the honeysuckle shaking creamy fists in the faces of roses that pushed out, blushing, in the starlight of wild clematis, white and purple. If all England is a park, this countryside around Holdenby was —is, even now—a queen's garden. Was it any wonder, then, that the boys became great lovers of flowers? Arthur's elder brother, Frederick, is at this writing one of the foremost plant growers in England. He is a Fellow of the

Royal Horticultural Society, and his greenhouses cover many acres of ground.

But perhaps it was the Autumn days that the boys loved best, when the hills and glens were a-glow with Autumn tints, and the tree trunks were cased in ruddy gold, while blackberries and cobnuts invited leisurely hours along the hedgerows. Also there was the added attraction of the orchards, for the apples were now ripening, and Arthur had a weakness for apples. Many were the orchards the boys invaded, and on more than one occasion Arthur and his brother Francis were treed for hours at a time, while some angry rustic waited below to give them a thrashing, could he but catch them. Often did the boys have to make a long detour on their way to and from school in order to avoid punishment they knew was due them. At one cottage they passed, a number of geese and very fierce ganders used to come squawking and thrusting out their beaks at the children as they went by. They used to look forward with uncomfortable apprehension to encountering these geese, and rarely disputed their right of way. A field of turnips was another temptation the boys could not resist when they were hungry.

"Yellow, mellow, ripened days,
Sheltered in a golden coating,
O'er the dreamy, listless haze,
White and dainty cloudlets floating;
Winking at the blushing trees,
And the sombre, furrowed fallow;
Smiling at the airy ease
Of the southward flying swallow.
Sweet and smiling are thy ways,
Beauteous, golden Autumn days."

When Winter came, it grew dark early, sometimes by four o'clock, and it was usually quite dark when the boys reached home. Arthur got great pleasure out of the early nightfall, for it seemed to end the responsibilities of the day most agreeably and give him such a long evening for reading. Strange to relate, his favorite reading for a long time was the Old Testament. Those old historical stories he found quite exciting. To him they were fine books of adventure.

The Grammar School at Creaton was a well-built building of brick, with tall, leaded-glass windows and slate roof, and stood near the village Church, the two buildings making a picturesque combination. The school was well-equipped, and heated in winter with open fireplaces. There were no "frills and fads"—so called—in those days. The different classes sat on long benches, or forms, with a long desk in front of each one, and one class recited while the other studied, many of the boys going over their lessons aloud. Outside, it sounded like a gigantic beehive. Physical punishment was a very live fact in school, then. Occasionally a boy was ferruled over the head; and most of the boys believed that if you could manage to rub orange peel on your hand, or put two hairs from your head across your palm before you held out your hand to the ruler, the pain of chastisement would be greatly mitigated. When a boy was whipped he usually tried to stuff cloth or paper in the seat of his trousers. School lasted six hours a day, forty-eight weeks of the year; and there was only a half-holiday on Saturdays. Arthur liked everything about going to school. He liked his teacher and his companions.

Invariably his home work would be found correct, and at school he would finish his lessons long before the rest of the pupils. His teacher, Mr. Meredith, noticed this, and would have him look over the work of the more backward pupils and assist them in their tasks. He was always keen, and would usually be ahead of the class in their work. Several times a year a big box of new school books would arrive from London. Opening these boxes, and looking into the fresh books that still had the smell of the press, was a great source of pleasure. Arthur was mentioned at school and at play as the boy "who wants to know more about things." Whoever created that desire in Arthur's heart was perhaps his greatest instructor and, surely, his greatest benefactor. No educator can hope even to mention the books or follow the research necessary to a great man's education. But he can often awaken in the child a desire to know, or an ambition to be, which acts like a magnet to draw to itself the needed information.

As a lad, Arthur was not quarrelsome. He would hold his own, though, and would not permit his other brothers to bluff or to attempt to boss him. Should they persist, it would mean a scrap. And, for his size, he was a formidable little fighter. Nevertheless, he was of a serious and peaceable turn of mind, and disliked idle quarrelling. When it came to climbing, he had no competition. The topmost branch of the tallest tree was ever his goal. On one occasion his father went into the big barn and, looking up, saw Arthur swinging from one rafter to another in search of sparrows' nests. Some of the rafters were old and might easily give way. Petrified for the moment, his father turned away, and going into the house, asked that he be told when the lad was safe on the ground once more. He had feared even to warn him, lest the sound of his voice should startle the boy and perhaps cause him to fall from the dizzy height of the rafters.

Arthur and his younger brother, Francis, were enthus-

Creaton Grammar School

The village candy shop

The road to school

The church and the school—Creaton

SCHOOL DAYS

Upper left—The Meet. *Upper right*—Waiting while the hounds search the coverts. *Center*—The start of the hunt. *Lower left*—Coming through the woods. *Lower right*—The fox takes refuge in a hollow tree

WHY ARTHUR PLAYED HOOKEY

iastic cricketers, and were members of Viscount Clifden's local cricket team. They were also good skaters, and when opportunity offered, would be found enjoying themselves on the ice.

The boys' method of fishing, if practiced now-a-days, would be open to much criticism. There were several small streams that flowed through the Letts farm. When the boys thought that a mess of trout would make a nice change for breakfast, they would dam-up one of the streams, take off their clothes, and jump in and catch the trout with their hands. The fish were quick, but the boys were quicker.

Only on one occasion did Arthur "play hookey" from school. That was on a day when the Empress of Austria was the guest of the Pytchley Hunt club, and the hounds met not far from the school. The temptation to follow the hounds was too great, and the school hour found the four brothers—Richard, Frederick, Arthur and Francis—traveling in an opposite direction. But who could blame them? There is no finer fox-hunting country in the world than this county of Northampton, and the Pytchley Hounds are one of England's premier packs. Moreover, the boys knew every yard of the country, every field and every fence, and they knew every move in the game. It was a glorious day for the sport. Two hundred riders were out, and the hounds were in fine fettle as the silver notes of the huntsman's bugle echoed through the woods, calling the pack from covert to covert.

Suddenly there is a call of "Tally ho! Tally ho!" as the baying hounds leap forward, hot on the scent of Reynard. Quick, let us follow them! Be sure to sit tight in your saddle, for even in early Spring, when there are yet few leaves on the blackthorns, and the ditches, cleared of weeds and grass, yawn in all their naked avidity for the reception of, and ultimate disaster to, horse and rider, it is no child's-play to cross one of those strongly fenced Northamptonshire valleys. With all the excitement produced by the emulation of hunting, and the insatiable desire to be nearer and nearer still to that fleeting vision which, like happiness, is so often just another stride beyond our reach, we cannot but feel that when we have traversed two or three miles of this style of country we have effected no contemptible feat of horsemanship. Yet the miles drag on and on, testing alike the courage of our horse and ourselves. Will the fox never tire! It is well beyond noon when the greater endurance of the hounds begins to tell, and eventually our quarry is overtaken by his pursuers. It is an exciting finish as the steaming horses gallop up and the huntsman deftly severs the head and tail from the victim, throwing its body to the pack as a reward for their morning's work, and presenting the head to the first gentleman and the "brush" to the first lady to finish this gruelling ride: souvenirs of a glorious morning's sport. There is now a brief halt for refreshments, while a fresh pack of hounds is brought up, and many of the riders change their horses. This accomplished, the hounds are once more under way, and the hunt is continued until late afternoon, the day providing memories that will linger for a life-time.

Five o'clock in the afternoon found the boys at the village of Long Buckby. Their knowledge of the country had enabled them to make many a short-cut for, boy-like, they could sense the direction in which the fox was heading. Nevertheless they had covered almost thirty miles during the day, and were thoroughly tired; but happy, for they had been in at the "kill." They still had six miles to go before reaching home, and were ravenously hungry, so they sat together in a field and ate raw turnips, before starting forth on the homeward journey and to the ordeal that they knew awaited them. It was pitch-dark long before the boys arrived home. Naturally, the first question that greeted them was a request for information as to where they had been. Richard started off with a very plausible story, but Frederick and Francis gave different versions, so Arthur decided he had better tell the truth. This he did, and got off with nothing worse than a lecture, but his brothers drew a severe chastisement. The next morning, at school, a similar ordeal had to be faced; but Richard, Frederick and Francis had failed to profit from the previous evening's experience. They each told a fib, and were duly punished. But Arthur knew better, and for his truthfulness was allowed to go unpunished. Early in life the lad realized that honesty was not only the best policy, but the only policy.

In addition to being truthful, this young lad was both generous and saving—traits that do not always go hand in hand. His unselfishness often led him to share his lunch basket with some less fortunate schoolfellow. In after years, as a man, he was just the same: always ready to share his worldly possessions with those less fortunate.

Even at that early age, Arthur gave promise of being a great merchant. He could trade marbles, kites—anything—and come out with a dividend. When their father would go to market, he would give the boys a few pennies to pull weeds, in order to keep their idle young hands occupied during his absence. Young Arthur saved his earnings and would, if possible, trade a knife for some other article and get some cash to boot. Even when playing marbles he would sell those that he won, and save the money thus earned. He displayed a determination that was remarkable in one so young. Anything that he set his young mind on obtaining, he would get. He would barter and trade a dozen articles until he got the particular thing that his mind coveted. He liked to own things of his very own, and would work to get them. One incident that demonstrates his genius for trading, and at the same time his determination to achieve his ends, occurred soon after he went to Creaton Grammar School. He was presented by his mother with a pair of white pigeons, but he announced his ambition of becoming the owner of a prize turkey. Accordingly, he watched the columns of a paper called the "Exchange and Mart," a journal devoted to the exchange of articles and livestock amongst its readers. He soon was able to exchange his pigeons for a fancy rooster; later, he succeeded in changing the rooster for a drake; then the drake for a goose and, finally, the goose for a fine prize gobbler; and, what is more, did not pay a penny during the course of the whole transaction. He had the patience and determination to carry anything through that he had set his mind on.

For one of the boys to accompany his father to the neighbouring town of Northampton, was quite an event. Arthur never forgot his first visit to this ancient borough. All the way there, he kept feeling afraid that the town would not come up to his expectations. He was so impatient that he thought every village along the road must surely be Northampton. When at last he reached the place, everything delighted him—the clean streets, the neat brass signs outside the doors, the smell of soft-coal smoke so suggestive of a city and, most of all, the gas street lamps which were lit before he started for home. The street lights seemed to suggest London, where he had always meant to go.

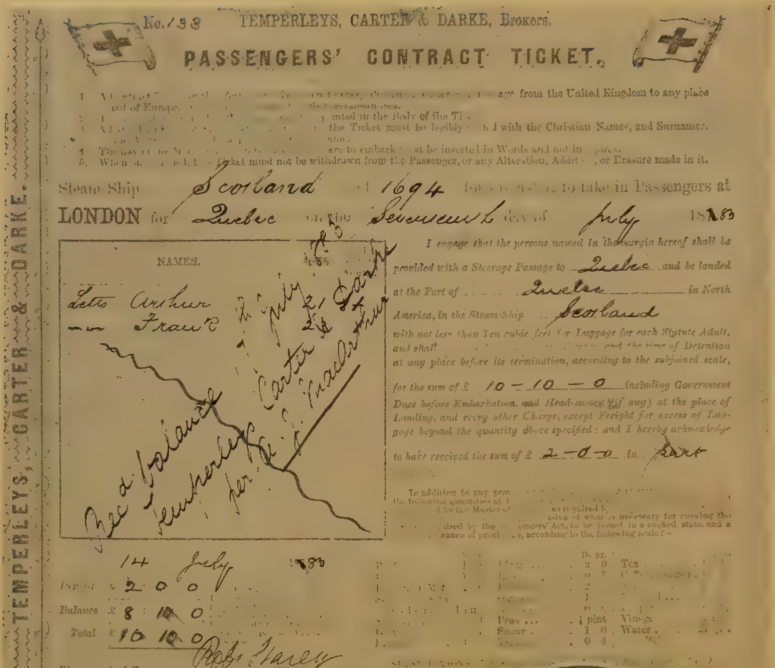
The Market Place

The Town Hall

The Drapery

Regent Square

NORTHAMPTON
Where the Letts family did their trading—The first town that Arthur visited



TEMPERLEYS, CARTER & DARKE.

No. 138 TEMPERLEYS, CARTER & DARKE, Brokers.

PASSENGERS' CONTRACT TICKET.

age from the United Kingdom to any place out of Europe.

the Ticket must be legibly with the Christian Names, and Surnames.

5. the Ticket must not be withdrawn from the Passenger, or any Alteration, Addit , or Erasure made in it.

Steam Ship Scotland of 1694 to take in Passengers at
LONDON for Quebec on the Seventh day of July 1883

NAMES.

Letts Arthur
— Frank

I engage that the persons named in the margin hereof shall be provided with a Steerage Passage to Quebec and be landed at the Port of Quebec in North America, in the Steam-Ship Scotland with not less than Ten cubic feet for Luggage for each Statute Adult, and shall and the time of Detention at any place before its termination, according to the subjoined scale, for the sum of £ 10 – 10 – 0 including Government Dues before Embarkation, and Head-money (if any) at the place of Landing, and every other Charge, except Freight for excess of Luggage beyond the quantity above specified: and I hereby acknowledge to have received the sum of £ 2 – 0 – 0 in part

14 July 1883

	£ 2	0	0
Balance	£ 8	10	0
Total	£ 10	10	0

Robt Varey

Signature in full, William

On behalf of HENRY ~~GREAVES~~

Of the Firm of TEMPERLEYS, C

21, BILLITER STREET, L

1.—If Passengers, throug
in the Ship, they shou
2.—Pas
Stamp Duty.

Arthur's ticket to the Land of Promise

ARTHUR LETTS
Photograph taken immediately after he completed his apprenticeship

Arthur's father was a man who took a great interest in the affairs of the county. He held several important offices in the rural administration of his district, and was at one time chairman of the Board of Guardians. He was a very stern man, and the children were brought up very strictly. One look from their father was always sufficient to make the boys "toe the line." If there was too much talking at the dinner table, a sharp rap with his knuckles was all that was necessary to insure silence during the remainder of the meal. Perhaps he felt that with eight children sitting at the table it was necessary to have discipline, and his discipline was strict. The result was that, whilst the boys always respected their father, they would never confide in him. Their mother was always the repository of their troubles.

On Sundays the boys all had to attend church or chapel, both morning and evening. Long discussions on religious matters were common among the neighbors, and in these a boy, if he could "argue," was allowed to take part. Infant baptism was one of the subjects most frequently discussed, and people felt very strongly about it. There was much talk, too, about men being saved by faith. The best man in the world would be lost unless he repented and accepted the sacrifice of Christ's blood, while a man who had committed crimes would, if he truly repented and believed, be saved. There was no discussion about a personal Devil or a literal Hell, because there was no doubt about them. If any one suggested that the torments of Hell might be mental rather than physical, he was set down without further question as an atheist. However, the boys' father made no attempt to influence them in their religious decisions. He left such matters to their conscience, merely insisting upon a due respect for the Sabbath day, and strict adherence to truthfulness and honesty at all times.

Under such wholesome surroundings, Arthur grew up strong and healthy, laying the foundation of that rugged constitution and dynamic personality which were to stand him in such good stead in his later and more strenuous years. While he was not called upon to do "chores," he naturally absorbed a great deal of knowledge about farming, and developed a love of Nature and out-of-doors that never left him.

A farm can support only so many people in comfort. It is therefore inevitable that some of the members of any large rural family in any country will eventually have to move, either to the city or to another part of their own or some other country, where there is a possibility of making a living. The Letts farm was no exception. Moreover, Arthur's father was anxious that his son should not get the chance to make a fool of himself, having observed that the boy did not seem to revere precedents, or even local wise men, as a lad of his age ought to. In discussing the matter with the school-master, the latter remarked that he was satisfied Arthur would one day make his mark in the business world; so arrangements were made for him to serve his apprenticeship to the dry-goods business or, rather, the drapery business, as it is commonly known in England. He was to enter the employ of a Mr. Hill, a leading draper of Lutterworth, a small town some sixteen miles from Holdenby. The agreement was that he should remain for five years, and that his father should pay a premium of £100. All that Arthur was to receive during the first four years was just his food. His parents were to clothe him and pay all his other incidental expenses, furnish pocket money, etc.; if the boy satisfactorily completed his five-years term, this premium deposit was to be returned to his parents. This was in June, 1876. Arthur was now fourteen years old.

The day he commenced his apprenticeship, his mother drove him over to Lutterworth and left him to the care of his future master. Some hours after her return home that day, young Arthur came home also; finding his home-sickness too great to bear, he had run the whole of the distance back. The next day his mother again drove him over to Mr. Hill, and again did Arthur run all the way home. Then followed a long, heart-to-heart talk between mother and son. In the morning he was taken back again, and this time he stayed. Arthur ever afterward credited his mother with his after-success by reason of the determination she had shown that he should enter the business world. All through his life, his tender references to his mother and to her influence over him were notable. Some of the most beautiful letters he ever wrote were to her. They show the sensitive, affectionate nature of the boy, and how much his mother was to him in companionship and sympathy. The treasuring of these memories by the busy and successful man meant that her instruction and influence were still with him, and that he had never forgotten the things she had taught in those early, impressionable years.

The Hill store was a college of hard work. The young apprentice had a bed under the counter; took down the shutters at break of day, and put them up long after dark in the winter. On Saturdays, he opened the store at six in the morning to catch the country people on the road to market. He closed near midnight, when the last of the returning marketers had clacked away home.

This was the day of the old-fashioned high bicycle, with the huge 56-inch wheel in front and the small 18-inch wheel behind. Arthur had one, and on Sunday he would ride over to East Haddon and pick up his younger brother Francis, who would ride with one foot on the small step, and together the pair would go home to Holdenby Lodge. In fine weather this would happen twice a month. The return journey was made in the late afternoon, for an apprentice must sleep every night under his employer's roof. Riding thirty-two miles in a day on those bicycles was quite an achievement.

Arthur made great headway at the store, and Mr. Hill spoke very highly of him—said he was a most attentive lad, and honest and truthful to a degree. His apprenticeship of five years came to an end in June, 1881, and then he took a position with Messrs. E. R. Roberts, Stratford Broadway, London. He remained with this firm for about a year, and then went to work for Hargreaves Smith, in Northampton; but he soon returned to London and secured a position with a firm at Gravesend.

Conditions in England were such that Arthur felt that the path which led to success was overfilled with a jostling, bustling, panting crowd, each eager to reach the goal, and all ready to dispute every step that a young man should take; and that favoritism only could bring one to the top. In other words, he had the "divine discontent" with things as they were. Under the circumstances the obvious thing to do was to look farther afield. Already his imagination, and also that of his younger brother, had become fired with the word of the opportunities across the Atlantic. Wonderful stories had drifted back to England of immigrants making gigantic fortunes in the fur trade; of farmers building railroads; of others without capital developing huge businesses in great American cities. Numerous sums of money sent home to provide comforts, or to bring out relatives and friends to the new country, gave color to the tales of universal success. There were no reports about failures—nothing but glowing descriptions of hot, sunny summers; of hard, frosty winters; of fertile soil and heavy crops; of plenty of work; of renewed hopes and great expectations for the future. America was only another name for Opportunity.

On June 17th, 1883, Arthur celebrated his 21st birthday in company with his brothers Frederick and Francis, and towards the end of the evening Arthur said to Frank—"What do you say if we go to Canada?" Frank fell in with the idea, and that night, when Arthur was leaving to return to Gravesend, he turned to his brother and said—"I have some money owing to me at Gravesend"; and then remarked again—"Frank, if I get this money, we will go to Canada." A couple of weeks later, Frank received a letter from Arthur telling him to be at the station with his trunk at 10 A.M. on July 17th, and if he (Arthur) waved his hat as the train came in, Frank and his brother Frederick were to board the train for the Victoria Docks at London. The train arrived, Arthur waved his hat as arranged, and the boys boarded the train. On their arrival at the docks, they had barely sufficient time to embark, when the boat pulled out. Arthur had already secured tickets for himself and Frank, and Fred accompanied them down the river as far as Gravesend. It was an unceremonious departure. Fearing their parents' pleadings to remain at home might surmount their desire to seek their fortune across the sea, the boys did not make known their intention until on board the steamer at London. A brief letter home, naming their destination—and their bridges were burned behind them!

Fred left the ship, and the brothers continued their journey to the New World on the S.S. Scotland, a vessel of less than 1700 tons register. The ship did not contain much in the way of comfort. She had been built for the P. & O. line, and had been rejected. Incidentally, her sea-going days were almost over, for on her very next voyage, having been transformed into a cattle-boat, she went down to spend eternity in Davy Jones' locker. In due time there came a day when the look-out in the crow's-nest shouted "Land Ahead!" and the boys experienced that never-to-be-repeated sensation of approaching the coast of a foreign land for the first time. It was the Land of Promise. They went ashore at Point Levis, Quebec, July 27th, 1883, at 4 A.M.

CHAPTER III

The Land of Promise

CHAPTER III

THE LAND OF PROMISE

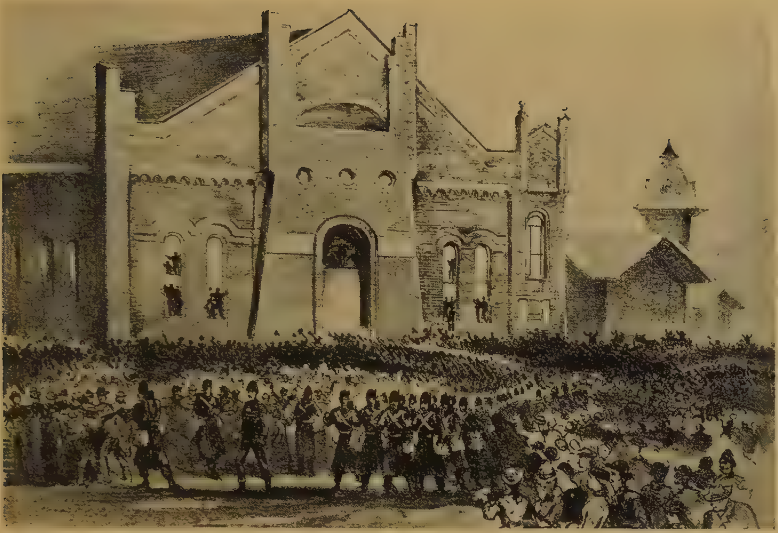
AMERICA!—and a new world. And how big it all seemed! The boys looked across the St. Lawrence river to Quebec on the opposite shore. They were thrilled. Never had they dreamed that a river could be so large. And not a soul on this vast continent did they know. Too late to turn back now—the die had been cast. Moreover, was not this the Land of Opportunity to which they had looked forward so eagerly? Fortunes were there to be made; but they had to be worked for.

After looking around awhile at many strange sights, Arthur and Francis went to the station to get their tickets. They were asked where they wanted to go, and what they wanted to do. Francis said that he wished to go on a farm, and was given a ticket to Port Hope, Ontario, then a small settlement, about 70 miles from Toronto. Arthur had intended to go to Toronto; but as his brother was going to Port Hope, he decided that he would go there too. Possibly he was fascinated by the psychology of the name. They travelled over the old Grand Trunk Railway as far as Montreal, had their supper there, and continued their journey to Port Hope, where they arrived the following day about 8 A.M. The employment agent to whom they had been referred directed them to go twenty-two miles farther on, to the village of Millbrook. It was a long, hot tramp. The road was dusty, and walking along the railroad tracks was equally unpleasant. The only food they had was some wild raspberries that they gathered along the roadside. At 5 P.M. the boys arrived at the farm of Edward Lawson, who invited the pair in and gave them supper, in return for which they helped to milk the cows. Arthur knew as much about milking as a dry-goods clerk might be expected to know, and sat on the wrong side of the cow—with the usual result. The cow objected, and kicked both Arthur and the pail over. However, he soon picked himself up, and sat down on the correct side this time and finished the job in good style. That evening proved to be one that lingered long in the boys' memories. The farmer and his family made them feel very much at home: there was music and singing until, finally, the hour growing late, the party broke up and the two brothers retired for the night, and enjoyed the luxury of a good bed and the first real sleep since leaving England. The next morning, after the boys had breakfasted, their host's wife, Mrs. Lawson, said that Mr. Lawson wanted to engage Arthur; but Arthur said, "I would much prefer it if you could give my brother Frank a position, as I am older and can get along better." Accordingly, Mr. Lawson engaged Francis and informed Arthur that the owner of the adjoining farm, a Mr. John Morton, required a man. Arthur went over, and was engaged at a salary of $1.00 per day and board. After the first day's labor Francis went over to see his brother, and they spent the evening together and exchanged experiences of their first day's work on a Canadian Farm. Arthur said that the stubble and thistles cut his hands and made them very sore indeed, but he said he would "stick it out."

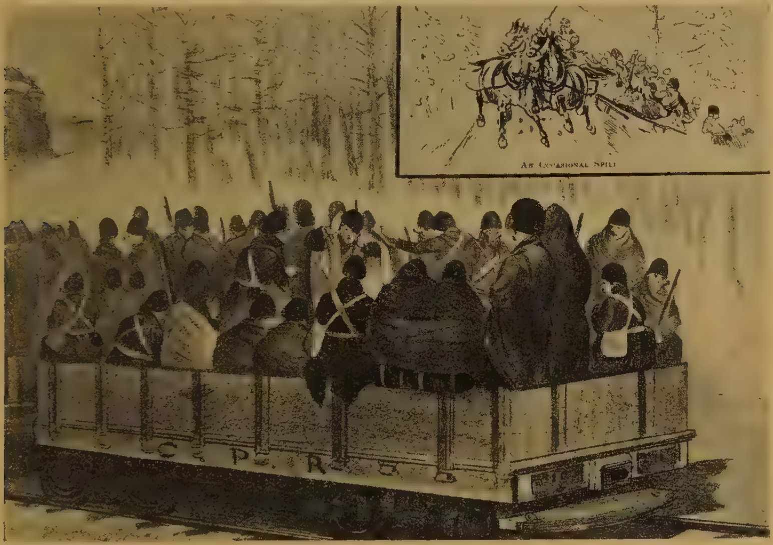
Every evening, after the toil of the day, the two boys would call over to see each other. Arthur was not happy. The work of a farm laborer did not seem to offer the opportunity he was seeking; moreover, his hands, soft from handling fine cloths, could not stand the hard manual labor the lad was called upon to perform. On the Sunday following their arrival, the two brothers were sitting on a log out in the bush, trying to decide what would be best for Arthur to do, when they heard a menacing growl, and on looking around, discovered they were being surveyed by a big black bear. That bear looked as big as a house. The boys previously had been warned about there being bears in the neighborhood, and were told, should they see one, to make for the nearest tree. The advice being fresh in their minds, they acted upon it very quickly when the bear advanced toward them. For two hours the two tenderfeet sat up in the tree-top waiting for Bruin to take his departure. Right then and there, while wondering if the bear would go away, Arthur decided that it was no place for him. His hands were sore, and his heart was not in that kind of work. When the boys climbed down from the tree, Arthur informed his brother that he had decided to go back to mercantile life. It was on the ninth day after their arrival at Millbrook that the two brothers parted. Before leaving, Arthur shared with his younger brother what little cash he had, retaining for himself but ten dollars. His ticket to Toronto cost him $3.00, so that he had seven dollars left with which to procure food and shelter while he was seeking work. Such was the sum of his worldly possessions.

In a few days, Arthur secured a position with Robert Walker & Sons, at that time the great clothing house of Ontario. This store, known as The Golden Lion, stood on the site where the King Edward Hotel now stands. Arthur had now returned to the business in which he had been apprenticed. His salary was $7.00 a week, and he obtained board and room in a house on Adelaide Street, W., for which he paid $3.50 a week. He was an alert lad, ambitious but prudent, and always industrious. To him, a day's work did not end merely because the hands of the clock reached a certain hour. He was always busy, and began early to capitalize his spare time. He was skilfull with tools, and in the spare moments of his evenings made fretwork brackets and fancy ornaments, and sold them; he also kept books for small businesses after hours, in order to add to his income. He knew that more successful careers were due to the proper employment of spare time than from time sold to others for wages. He was particularly careful never to live up to his income; and, as his income increased, he increased not the percentage of expenditure but the percentage of saving. He interpreted thrift, however, not as a trait of niggardliness but as Theodore Roosevelt interpreted it: common sense applied to spending. He was passing a cigar store one day, when he met his brother coming out with a cigar in his mouth. "Where did you get that cigar?" he asked. "I just bought it," answered his brother. Arthur shook his head, and replied, "That will not do, Frank; a cigar is a luxury, and you cannot afford luxuries on your small wages; what you should do is to save and invest your money, and buy any luxury you want with the interest. Then the other chap pays for it."

Arthur had been working for Robert Walker & Sons a

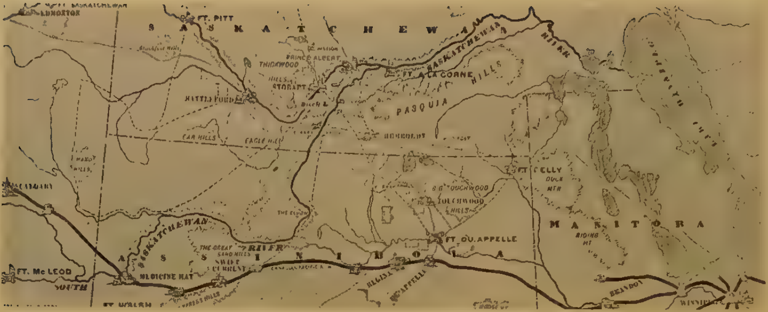


The Grenadiers and the Queen's Own, marching out of the Drill Shed, Toronto, en route to the station, Monday morning, March 30th, 1885


An Occasional Spill
C. P. R.

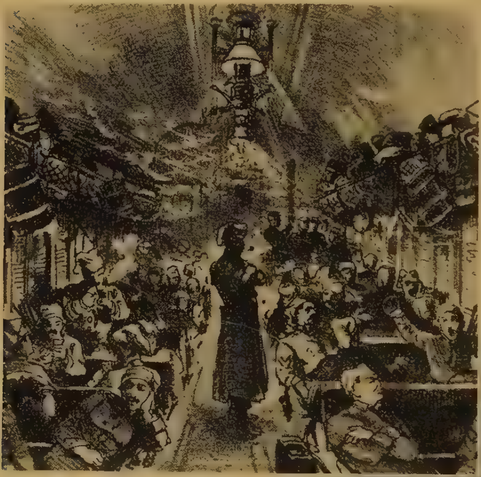
Cold comfort in open flat cars. Thermometer below zero

THE CALL TO ARMS

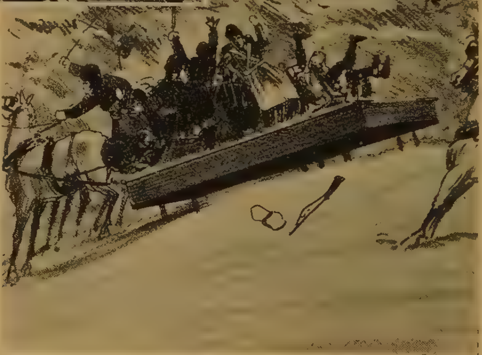

FT. PITT
SASKATCHEWAN
PRINCE ALBERT
THICKWOOD
HILLS
CARLTON
BATTLEFORD
EAGLE HILL
FT. A LA CORNE
HILLS
PASQUIA
HUMBOLDT
SASKATCHEWAN
RIVER
FT. PELLY
DUCK MTN
TOUCHWOOD
TOUCHWOOD HILLS
FT. QU. APPELLE
MANITOBA
RIDING MT
BRANDON
WINNIPEG
CALGARY
FT. McLEOD
SOUTH
MEDICINE HAT
SASKATCHEWAN
RIVER
THE GREAT SAND HILLS
SWIFT CURRENT
ASSINIBOIA
REGINA
CYPRESS HILLS
FT. WALSH

Map of the North West Territories

This sketch map was made during the rebellion, in order to show the principal scenes of activity embraced by the uprising of the halfbreeds and Indians



Night time on the train en route to the front



Ups and downs. The terrible roads through the woods little less than two years, when the Indian Rebellion broke out. This rebellion had its origin in the dissatisfaction of the half-breeds, who complained that while the Metis of Manitoba were given grants of 240 acres under the Act of 1870, their claims had been ignored; and they thought that the Government should at least give them free patents for the farms which they had been cultivating, and compensation for disturbance in cases where the Dominion surveyors found it necessary to rearrange the shape of their holdings, the old French form of delimitation being at variance with the modern system. They were told that if they desired to be considered as Indians a most liberal reserve would be set apart for them. If they desired to be considered white men, they could get 160 acres of land each as homesteads. But they were not satisfied with that. They wanted to get land scrip for a large quantity of land, upwards of 200 acres, and then get their homesteads as well.

Louis Riel, a half-breed Franco-Indian who had become notorious as the leader of what was known as the "Red River Rebellion" in 1870, was at the head of the rebels in this later rising. He had been living for some time in Montana, but was invited over by the half-breeds, who had planned their mode of attack. The government previously had received an intimation that if they would give Riel a sum of money—the sum of $5000 was mentioned—he would withdraw. This proposition, of course, could not be entertained for a moment. So he remained there inciting the half-breeds, and attempting to rouse the Indians by telling them the country belonged to them. He was considered, on account of his former experiences, as rather a martyr in the cause, a sort of half-breed "Mahdi," and was looked up to with a superstitious regard.

When Indians donned the war paint, it was next to impossible to reason with them, and even influential mediators were unable to bring about a peaceable solution of the difficulties.

Thus it was that, on a March morning in 1885, the citizens of Toronto were thrilled at the news from Saskatchewan. Louis Riel had raised the standard of rebellion, and at the head of a considerable number of half-breeds and Indians had slaughtered over a score of white settlers at a village called Duck Lake; and it looked as if the whole of the country up there would spring into flame, for the feeling of the Indians towards the pioneering efforts of the whites was known to be one of intense hatred and contempt. The Canadian Government immediately ordered troops to be sent to the aid of the threatened inhabitants. Arthur Letts at that time was a member of one of the local volunteer units called the Queen's Own Rifles. This corps was composed mainly of young business men and store clerks, who had but indifferent training, old and obsolete equipment, and were armed with the Snider rifle, a weapon of doubtful efficiency. The call to arms went forth on Friday, the 27th of March, and the buglers of the regiment sounded the "alarm" and the "assembly" at various points in the city that night, whilst the officers and N.C.O.'s scurried about in an effort to get mobilized. The next morning dawned in a steady, drizzling rain as the regiment mustered at the old drill-shed (now known as the St. Lawrence Market), two hundred and fifty strong; and the men from the office-stool, the counter and the workshop stood side-by-side, ready to fight for Canada.

Arthur Letts was among the first to arrive at the drill-hall. He was a private in Number One Company. His captain was Thomas Brown; the commanding officer of the company was Lieut.-Col. A. A. Miller, and their Brigadier was Lieut.-Col. Otter.

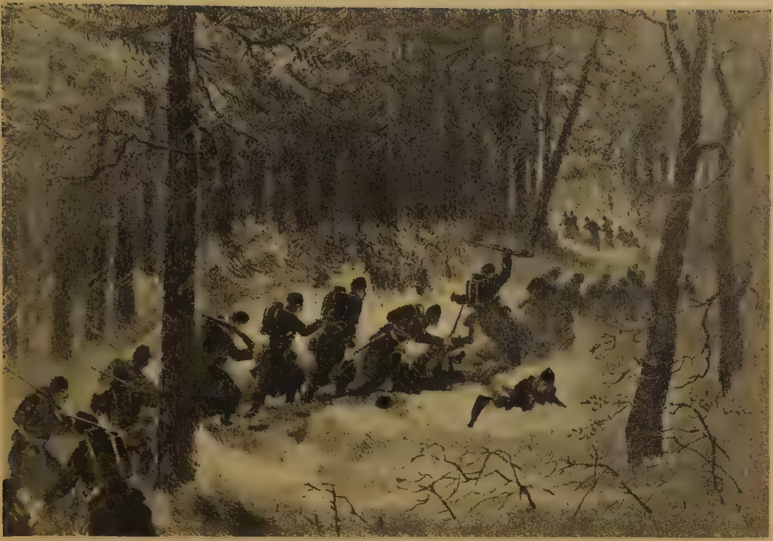
On Monday morning, March 30th, the regiment, together with the Royal Grenadiers, another militia unit, entrained for the field of action. On their way to the station, newspaper specials announced a dispatch from Battleford, stating that Poundmaker, the powerful Chief of the Cree Indians, was concentrating his tribes in large numbers near Battleford, 500 strong; more coming in all the time, threatening to burn the town and take possession of the stores and barracks.

The population of Battleford was not more than 600, about one-half of whom were white.

It was 12:30 P.M. when the troop train pulled out of the station at Toronto, and commenced a journey that the men were destined to remember all their lives. They travelled via the Canadian Pacific Railway to Carleton Place, and through to Mattawa, where they were billeted among the hotels. From there the journey was continued to Bascatomasing and Dog Lake, the end of the track. From here on, there were several sections of the railroad uncompleted, so the troops detrained and marched across the frozen surface of Dog Lake, a distance of 22 miles. It was bitterly cold at this time, and at night they were put on a train of open flat cars; the mercury being well below zero. They travelled all night, many of them suffering severely, being compelled to keep stamping their feet in order to preserve them from frost-bite. Meanwhile, their eyes were filled with cinders. This was on the Wednesday night. On Thursday afternoon they arrived at Port Monro, on Jackfish Bay, across which they marched another twenty-two miles and then had another journey by flat cars under the same trying circumstances. The next stage was a trip in sleighs. Here, trouble was met. In the dense woods it was impossible to see the partially-broken track in the snow, and upsets were numerous. The snow was four and five feet deep, and the spilled soldiers had to pick themselves out of it and search for their seats again. No description could give an idea of the terrible roads through the woods. There were pitch-holes six feet deep, into which the horses and sleighs would plunge unexpectedly. Progress, consequently, was very slow, and it was after 5 A.M. before the advance guard reached the end of the road. The intense cold made all blue; and the only bed the men had to go to was in an immense, unheated tent with many rents, through which the wind whistled in cutting blasts. No tents had been pitched previously, and the only preparation for the soldiers was that the snow had been partially shovelled out, leaving a white, hard floor of the "beautiful."

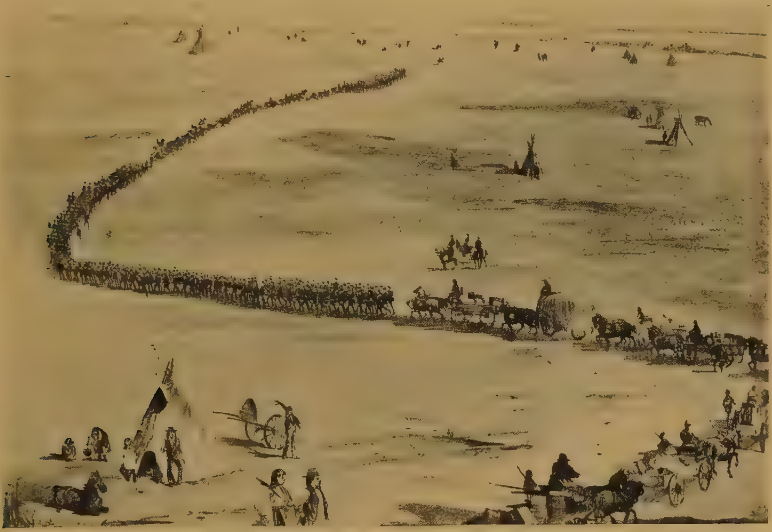
One night the troops were billeted at a place called McKellar's Harbour, and were quartered on a partially-submerged barge which lay in the harbor. Planks were laid on the ice in the submerged hull, and Arthur and his companions made their beds on these planks. A large stove was obtained and set going, but in the night, with the heat of the stove and the men's bodies, the ice beneath the planking commenced to thaw and the men awoke to find themselves lying in several inches of ice-cold water.

Then came another journey of 50 miles in open flat cars to Red Rock, from which point the troops marched to Nepigon. Into the solemn darkness of the pines and hemlock the column slowly moved, on either side being snow four feet deep. It was almost impossible to keep the track and a mis-step buried any unfortunate individual up to his neck. Then it began raining, and for three mortal hours there was a continuous downpour.

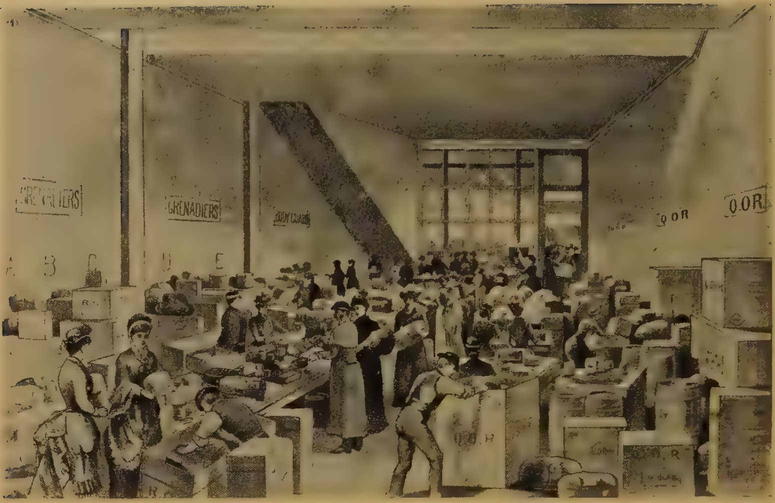


The Midnight March to Nepigon

"Into the solemn darkness of the pines and hemlock, the column slowly moved, each side being snow four feet deep. It was almost impossible to keep the track, and a mis-step buried the unfortunate up to his neck. Then it began raining . . . ."



Colonel Otter's brigade approaching the South Saskatchewan


GRENADIERS
GRENADIERS
BODY GUARDS
Q.O.R
Q.O.R
A
B
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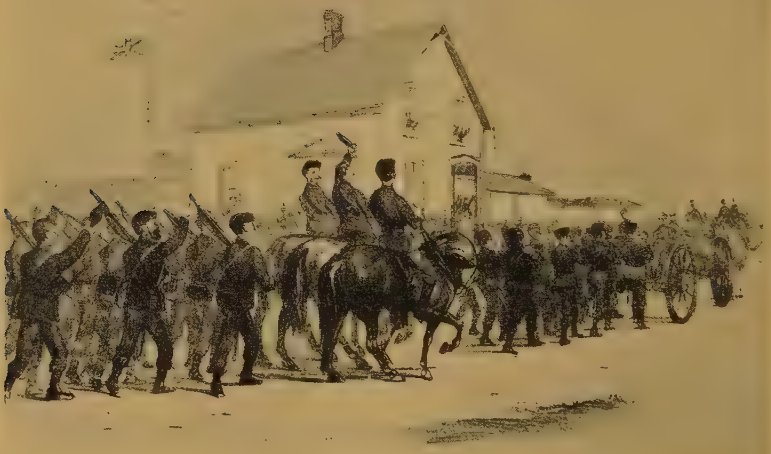
E

Canada did not forget her volunteers. Ladies of Toronto receiving and packing contributions for the men at the front



The relief of Battleford—the Queen's Own marching in

At Nepigon they found a train of coaches waiting to carry them to Winnipeg. As a result of their ordeal, there was hardly a man who was not suffering from frost-bite. Col. Otter was snow-blind, and had to be led across the last portage. Several men were suffering from the same cause, and a number of the Queen's Own were delirious from want of sleep. A journey that today is made comfortably in less than two days had taken the troops a week to cover—a week of torture to those unhardened men.

The troops stayed but one day in Winnipeg. The people were organizing in every town and village of Manitoba, and clamoring for arms. Here they learned that the Battleford people were still safe in barracks, although nearly all the Saskatchewan Indians were ready for pillage and bloodshed. No time was to be lost. On April 6th they entrained again for Qu'Appelle, 30 miles east of Regina, where the little force split up. The Grenadiers left for Clarke's Crossing, and Arthur's unit proceeded to Swift Current, from which point they were to march to the relief of Battleford, two hundred miles due north across the prairie. The march to the South Saskatchewan was made without difficulty, but the crossing itself was a tedious matter, and on the north side of the Saskatchewan the trail at first proved very heavy. In spite of their difficulties, however, they made good progress.

It was the 18th of April when the Queen's Own crossed the South Saskatchewan, and the advance guard reached Battleford on the 25th. In seven days they had marched 168 miles, which was a remarkable accomplishment considering the nature of the country traversed. It was after sundown when Col. Otter's brigade came in sight of Battleford, and the men could see the flames distinctly, as the town was being fired up. The Mounted Police scouts galloped hastily into the town and succeeded in driving out the Indians. Early next morning the relieving column marched in amidst great rejoicing from the terrified inhabitants. Events so shaped themselves that Col. Otter decided it would be necessary to advance against Chief Poundmaker, who had retired to his reservation, 34 miles north of Battleford. A flying column of 300 men was organized, 50 of whom were picked from the ranks of Arthur's regiment, Arthur himself being amongst those selected for this special duty.

All went well until they reached Cut Knife Creek, where there was a gully which the men found extremely awkward and difficult to cross. However, they crossed just in time, as it proved; for the Mounted Police, who were in advance, had barely gained the opposite slope when they were met by a well-directed fire of the Indians, who had arrived just too late to take up their position in the gully. Some of the Mounted Police fell, and several were wounded. The Indians charged down, evidently with the intention of yet gaining the gully; but, although a number of them got within thirty yards, they were driven back, and the guns being brought up to the brow and opened upon them, the Indians retreated across the open ground. With desperate bravery they charged again, firing as they came, and so fierce was their attack that the artillery was forced to retreat, some of the men being badly wounded. At noon, the gun carriages were broken down under the hard usage to which they had been subjected. The enemy then succeeded in occupying the gully in considerable numbers, and the troops were compelled to re-cross the creek to the prairie. When it was discovered that a man of his regiment had been left on the battlefield, young Letts went back all alone, found his friend, and took him to camp.

Arthur had several narrow shaves himself. Several bullets had passed through his clothing, and he had been slightly wounded in the shoulder and the calf of the leg. For his conduct during the battle his officer, Captain Brown, sent his name in to General Middleton, and he was mentioned in dispatches for conspicuous gallantry in the face of the enemy. Those who believe in heredity will perhaps agree that the presence of the ancient swords and suits of armour in the old attic at Holdenby had that day been fully justified.

The battle of Cut Knife Creek lasted for upwards of seven hours. The enemy's losses were several times that of the Canadians. With their force weakened, and having no cavalry, the troops were unable to proceed further against the Indians. So they returned to Battleford with their wounded. The real object of the expedition, however, had been achieved. They had put the fear of the white man into the Indians. Another day, and it would have been too late, and Poundmaker with all his braves would have been on his way to reinforce Riel.

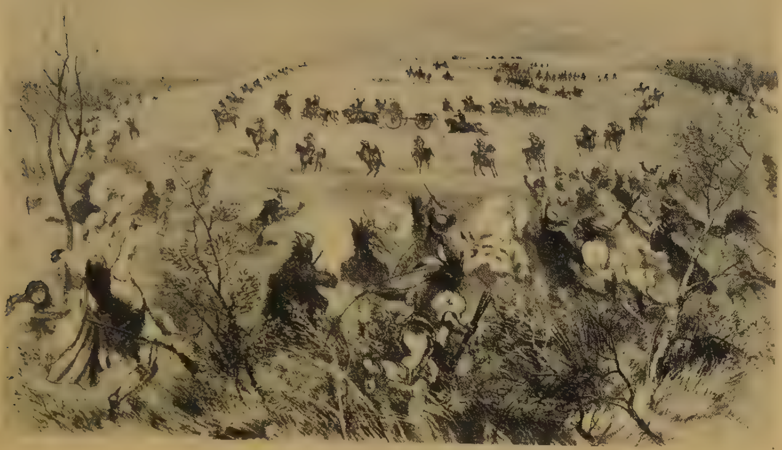
As far as the Queen's Own were concerned, this practically ended the campaign. Other engagements in Saskatchewan took place, and there was considerable guerilla warfare, but Arthur's regiment was held in Battleford for patrol work and garrison duty—two months of comparative inaction. By this time the men were pretty well sick of the campaign, or rather the concluding phase of it, and were anxious to be ordered home.

A member of Arthur's company, who in after years achieved prominence, was one day relating his experiences. The name of Arthur Letts was mentioned. "There was one thing about that lad," remarked his former companion, "that I shall never forget. Every night he would go down on his knees and say his prayers. To do that regularly in the presence of a group of soldiers, took a great deal of courage. At first we kidded him, but later we respected him and marvelled to think a mother's training could be so enduring."

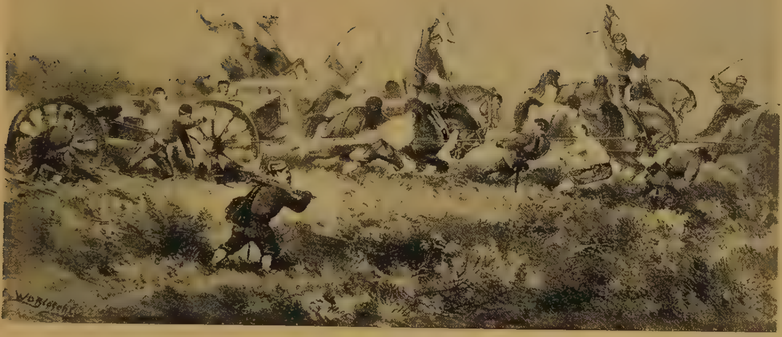
By the end of June, the suppression of the half-breed rebellion was complete. On July 8th the Queen's Own marched out of Battleford on the homeward journey, the returning troops meeting with a hearty and spontaneous welcome along the entire route which they had to traverse.

Toronto, with its flags and banners and pretty faces at every window, presented a picture that was stamped forever after upon the memory of all who saw it. Every available point of vantage was occupied. Boys were perched on the tops of lamp-posts, while, high up, people sat on chimney tops and looked down upon the moving masses. The chimes of St. James' Cathedral floated over the city as the procession moved forward to St. Lawrence Market Square. Here the men were welcomed home by the Mayor and other dignitaries and, after a desperate effort, broke away from their friends and started off for the drill-shed—there to be dismissed, to return to their homes and fight their battles over again before audiences of willing listeners.

Arthur's first thought was of his parents, who were now living with the younger members of their family on a farm at Everett, Ontario. Agriculturalists in England had for some years been fighting a losing game, and when Richard, the eldest son, left for Australia, and Arthur and his brother Francis departed for Canada, home ties were broken and the parents decided that they, too, would leave the homeland. It was with aching hearts and tear-dimmed eyes that they took a last look at those fair fields of Holdenby in which their family for so many centuries had taken such



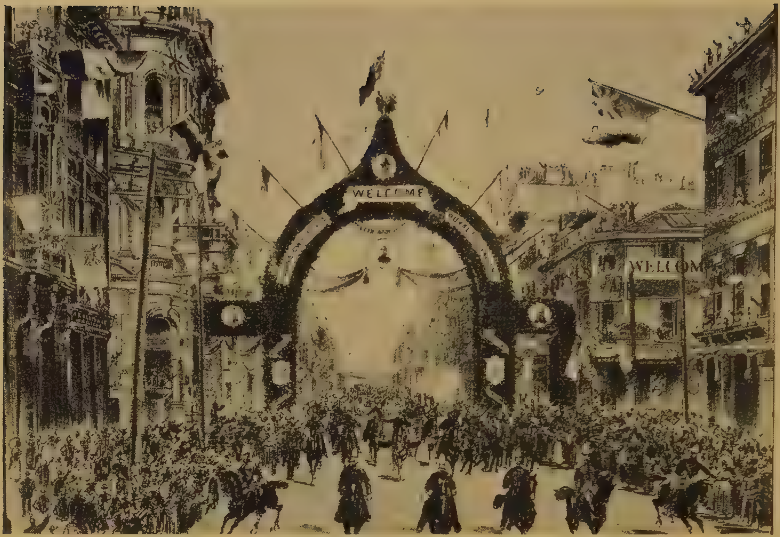
The Battle of Cut-Knife Creek



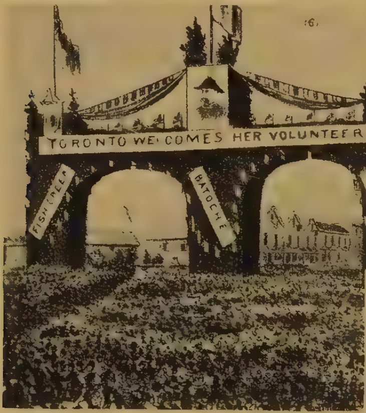
W.D.Blatchly

Bringing the guns into action at Cut-Knife Creek

ARTHUR LETTS IN BATTLE

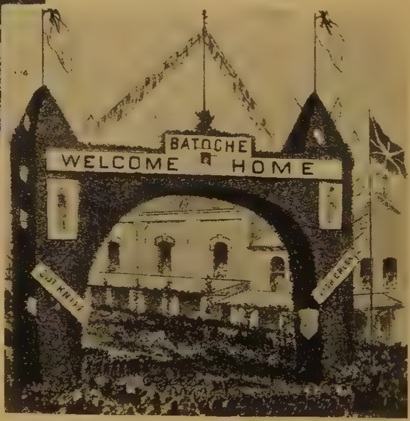

WELCOME
WELCOME

Toronto's great reception to the returning troops. Triumphal arch at corner of King and Yonge Streets


TORONTO WELCOMES HER VOLUNTEERS
FISH CREEK
BATOCHE
CUT KNIFE CREEK

Arch at the corner of Queen and Brock Streets

Arch at the corner of Yonge and Magill Streets


BATOCHE
WELCOME HOME
CUT KNIFE
FISH CREEK

WELCOME HOME,
VOLUNTEERS!

pride—fields that, to this very day, although now in the hands of other farmers, are still known as "Letts Home Field" or "Letts Brake Hill;" for it is the custom in England for the farmers to name their fields and meadows. But the westward urge of fortune was beckoning them—that same urge that had prompted their forebears to leave the frozen lands of Latvia in favor of Denmark, and later to go still farther westward to England. So it was that, in the summer of 1885, we find them settled on a farm of 200 acres, some thirty miles from Toronto. Like all parents, they were much worried over their boy's welfare when they learned he had gone to the front, and eagerly awaited his letters from Saskatchewan, many of which were written on birch bark that Arthur had stripped from the trees, for the lad never regarded inability to secure writing paper as an excuse for not writing to his parents.

The first train out of Toronto saw Arthur on his way to Everett. He took with him, as souvenirs, three or four gophers which he had caught out West. He made a wooden pen for them, and was quite proud of his little pets; but when he went out to feed them, the following morning, they had vanished. He had neglected to floor the bottom of the pen, thus enabling the gophers to burrow their way to liberty under the walls of the cage. After bringing them so far, by a slight oversight he had lost them; but it was a lesson he took well to heart. A pair of prairie chickens, which were also a part of his trophies, were kept for quite a time. Much to his mother's surprise, Arthur did not appreciate the comfortable bed she had prepared for him. He had become so used to sleeping rolled in a blanket on the ground that, after some restless hours on the soft mattress, he took the blankets from the bed and slept on the floor. After a week with his family—

happy days spent in the woods, picnicking, gathering berries and telling stories of the Far West—Arthur returned to Toronto, and resumed his position at the Golden Lion, a position that had been kept open for him.

Arthur subsequently received a medal from the British Government in recognition of his services, and all of the volunteers who went out to the North-West to aid in suppressing the rebellion were granted a free homestead of two adjoining quarter sections of land, comprising 320 acres in all, located in Manitoba or the North-West Territories. Any man who did not wish to take up a homestead was given eighty dollars in land scrip, which the government redeemed at face value when tendered on behalf of any payments for Dominion land, rents, grazing privileges, etc.

Arthur remained at the Golden Lion for a year longer, only to realize that he could expect little in the way of advancement; so he secured a position in the carpet department of John Kay Son & Co. at a salary of $75.00 a month. He had managed to save money, even from his small earnings, and the money he had saved soon stood him in good stead—as saved money always does—for when a bailiff's sale was announced of two uncompleted houses on Brunswick Avenue to satisfy debts against the builder, he expressed his determination to have them. Arthur scraped together all his savings, which—with the help of some financing by friends, besides the money he made by selling the land scrip from his military venture—enabled him to attend the sale and purchase the houses. He then completed them, and sold one for what both had cost. That gave him a house of his own that had cost him nothing. This was his first investment, and indicated the acumen which was shown in his later financial operations, when these developed into matters of hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars.

Being now possessed of a house, the young man decided to make it a home, and on August 25th of this same year he married Florence Philp, daughter of the Rev. S. C. Philp, a Methodist Episcopal minister, then stationed at Bracondale, now a part of Toronto. For best-man at his wedding he chose his friend, Geo. I. Cochran, at that time a young law student in Toronto.

With the added responsibilities of a wife and home of his own, this young man determined to work harder than ever. He gave more than his salary asked for, and saw that his work was well done regardless of the time taken to do it. He never worked by the clock; always by the job. This meant effort, of course—untiring, ceaseless, unsparing—and it meant work, constant and enduring. He schooled himself into the belief that if he did his work well, and accomplished more than was expected of him, the question of wages would take care of itself. He not only tried to fill the particular job set for him, but made it a rule at the same time to study the position just ahead, to see what it was like, what it demanded, and then, as the opportunity presented itself, do a part of that job in addition to his own.

One day a lady came into the store with a sample of carpet that she wanted matched. The manager of the department waited on her, and after a brief glance at the sample, named it and said, "Madam, I am sorry, but this pattern is no longer made. It is off the market." The man's knowledge, sure and certain, showed Arthur why he was head of the department. After that, when the other clerks would stand gossiping in idle moments, Arthur would be poring over the stock, studying designs and quality, until there came a day when he could correctly give the factory number as well as the number of the pattern of every roll of carpet in the department.

Arthur was one day the unfortunate victim of an accident that might have had very serious consequences. A rug fixture fell to the ground, striking him on the head, and causing concussion of the brain. For long days and nights he remained in a very critical condition, during which time his wife never left his bedside. These were anxious days, for the physician was dubious over the ultimate outcome; but after a few weeks he was able to return to the store and again resume his duties.

For three years Arthur worked for the John Kay Co., during which time his salary was advanced to $125.00 a month. This was considered a very good salary at that time in Toronto, but Arthur was not satisfied. He felt that Toronto would not pay enough for the kind of brains he thought he could offer. The young man had dreams. Changing of articles, or courtesy to customers, was largely unknown in those days, and the treatment accorded to employees left much to be desired. He dreamed of a big store in which he could transact a great business, where it would be easy for customers to get in and easy to do business therein. And, while he dreamed, that westward urge that had dominated his family for generations whispered, "Go West, young man, and grow up with the country." So, having the proper admixture of adventure with his growing business sense, he once more pulled up stakes, and this time moved to Seattle. He had concluded that the *United States* was the real land of opportunity. Six years in Canada had convinced him that the country south of the border offered greater opportunities for young, ambitious men; so he decided to throw in his lot with the American people.

Arthur Letts with his regiment—in the front rank of the privates. Photographed the day the Queen's Own returned from the front, July 23, 1885

NORTH WEST
1885
CANADA

For gallantry in the face of the enemy. Medal awarded to Arthur Letts—a highly prized possession

ARTHUR LETTS
at the time of his marriage. Toronto, 1886

What was the incentive that drove those adventurous explorers and pioneers of the past into the uncharted waste? We have almost forgotten, or feared to admit, that it was trade—the development of new sources of wealth. The lure of gold, or the lure of trade, if you wish, linked with love of adventure, has ever been the stimulus which has impelled thousands to cope with impossible odds. We can see the romance in those bygone centuries; it is far more difficult to get a true perspective of life in the last forty years and to portray effectively the romance of today. Yet it exists, and it entered greatly into the life of Arthur Letts.

It was in the latter part of May, 1889, that young Letts arrived in Seattle, but fortune did not by any means hasten him on toward the ultimate success he eventually realized. He was destined to endure a number of severe set-backs.

In order to "get next to" American ways before venturing for himself, he secured a position with the firm of Taklos Singerman Co., and was placed in charge of their carpet department. A few days later—on Thursday, June 6th, to be exact—there occurred a great calamity. In Jim McGough's paint shop, at the corner of Front and Madison Street, a glue pot was accidentally overturned. Instantly the whole paint shop was in flames. At first the fire seemed easy to control. A cheer rose from the crowd as the beat of the fire engine was heard and two streams of water were turned on to the fire, but the cheer of hope died away in a wail of despair when, after a few minutes of pumping, the streams became so weak that they did not reach to the top of the building, showing that there was no water with which to fight the fiend of fire. Within an hour, the smoke of Seattle's burning was a lurid tower visible many miles away. All day this lurid tower swayed in the sky, reddening the sun, darkening the day, and filling the land with smoke. From every side came the roaring of flames, the crashing of walls, and the detonations of dynamite. The city was doomed. There was no water. The dynamite was giving out. Men labored as they had never labored before, but their efforts were futile. None worked harder than the employees of Taklos Singerman Co., and Arthur remained at his post until the last minute. The flames had reached a nearby hardware store where over thirty tons of cartridges were stored. These went off in a perfect fusillade, continuing for over twenty minutes. When the din had ceased, the firm's manager came to Arthur and remarked, "This morning, we were worth six hundred thousand dollars. In an hour it will all be gone. The flames will be here in fifteen minutes. You may go now." As Arthur left the store, the setting sun showed blood-red through a cloud of smoke, and the air was so surcharged with heat that respiration became difficult. Here and there through the smoke, creeping warily under the shadows of tottering walls, emerged occasional men and women. The journey home he never forgot. The net results of this day of horror are best told in an editorial in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, which appeared next morning in the form of a small, single sheet of paper:

"The story which is told this morning needs no elaboration. Our whole business and commercial district, the very heart and center of the city, upwards of fifty blocks of business buildings, is this morning a glowing heap of ashes. But a single important business building, the Boston block, is left standing. Every bank, every wholesale house, every hotel, every newspaper office and nearly every store has been swept out of existence. Property which yesterday morning represented millions of dollars has been destroyed. The facts speak for themselves. In the presence of such a calamity it would be useless to multiply phrases. No other American city ever suffered a loss proportionately great."

Here was young Letts in a new country, where the ways and manners of the people were entirely different from what he had been accustomed to. Just imagine such a state of affairs: this young man of twenty-seven, out of a position, nearly three thousand miles away from friends, with a wife and their little daughter (Edna) scarcely two years old; and the city lying in ashes at his feet. Such was his apprenticeship in American ways. For a moment he was tempted to return to Toronto where, he knew, his old position awaited him. But pride and doggedness stood him well in hand; his buoyant spirit soon asserted itself. He decided to see it through and stay in the United States. He felt within himself the power of doing things. So, to make sure, he took out his first citizenship papers, and thus once more "burned his bridges behind him."

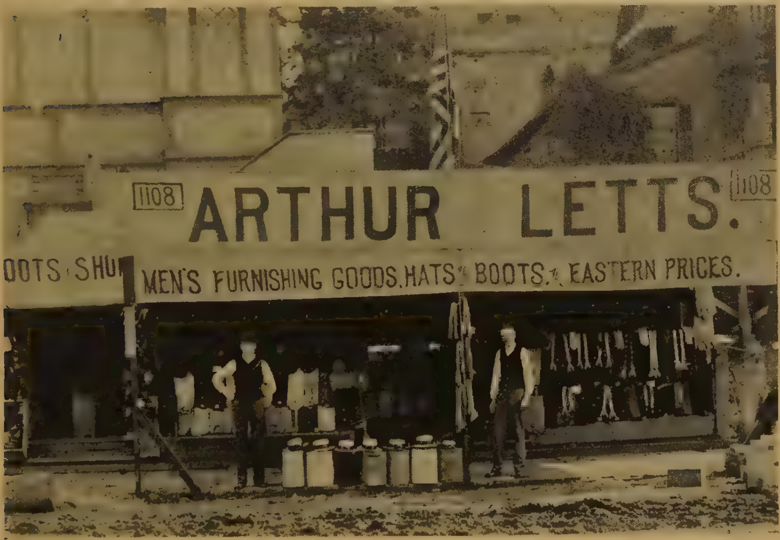
Instead of looking upon the destruction of Seattle as a calamity, he reasoned that inasmuch as practically all the stores had been destroyed and that people would have to have wearing apparel, here was his opportunity to start a store of his own, although he had not intended to do this so soon. He hunted around and secured a small lot on Second Avenue, raked it clear, and erected a tent. He knew no one in this country, and it was with little cash, but a surplus of grit, that he searched for merchandise, opening his first account with Neustadter Bros., of Portland, Oregon. He gathered together a crude stock of goods, and opened a men's furnishing store in the tent. It was only a tent, but it was the humble impetus of a great accomplishment, and the young proprietor experienced the thrill of seeing his name over the entrance in letters so big that all Seattle could read.

But doing business in a town that had been treated as harshly as Seattle had been treated, proved to be almost impossible. Right here another man might have thrown up the sponge. It was heavy ploughing, early and late, and little or no reward. Seattle had become one of the "toughest" places known. No women were allowed on the streets after 8 P.M. Young Letts was compelled to sleep in his tent in order that no one would steal his merchandise. He slept with a gun under his pillow; on more than one occasion he awakened in time to see the canvas side of his tent being slit open with a knife; and without hesitating, he fired point-blank at where he thought the intruder would be. For months, the only time he was able to go home to his family was on Sunday, between breakfast and dark. This in itself was a great worry to him, for another daughter, Gladys, was born on September 9th, and the longing to see more of his family only made his problems more difficult. He had few close friends or companions; not because he did not like to be with people—he simply did not have the opportunity.

After things had settled down a little in Seattle, he decided to open another store in Spokane (then known as Spokane Falls), leaving his brother-in-law, Harry Ecclestone, in charge of his Seattle business. It was customary then to put any money taken in after banking hours into a satchel, and carry it home for safe keeping. A money satchel in one hand and a gun in the other—that was the way young Letts went home to his family each night, after he had decided to leave the merchandise in his tent to police protection. On one occasion, when Letts was in Spokane Falls, Harry Ecclestone was chased by a bandit right to his house, and fell exhausted in the doorway, barely in time to save his satchel.

ARTHUR LETTS

The tent, under whose canvas roof Arthur Letts, merchant, first began to buy and sell goods


1108
ARTHUR LETTS.
1108
OOTS SHU
MEN'S FURNISHING GOODS. HATS & BOOTS. EASTERN PRICES.

It was only a tent, but it was the humble impetus of a great accomplishment —*Arthur Letts at right.* Seattle, 1889

ARTHUR LETTS
At the time he was homesteading in Kitsap County, Washington

CHILDREN THREE
Gladys, Arthur, Jr., Edna.
Seattle, 1893

The business in Spokane Falls did not pay, and was soon abandoned. In Seattle things were going from bad to worse. Those early dreams that young Letts had indulged in, as to what he would do when he had a store of his own, were temporarily in the discard. He was now fighting for his existence. About this time (1890) many settlers were taking up government land, and Arthur Letts got the fever.

A day came when the city authorities ordered down the tents. Rent in the business center of Seattle at this time was almost prohibitive for a man of his means. He thought he could do better with land, so he stored his goods and took up some land about twenty miles from Seabeck. Seabeck was a little town of not more than 200 people, located in Kitsap County, near the entrance to Darop Bay. To reach the property it was necessary to travel by boat to Seabeck, a tedious journey of some eighty miles from Seattle; and then tramp or ride twenty miles through the forest. Here he cleared several acres of land, and built a log cabin. When the cabin was finished, the family moved in. No need here to dwell upon the hardships of homesteading. There is little that could happen, in the way of discouragement, that did not happen. Destiny seemed determined to drive this man back to the city. His journeys into Seattle for supplies necessitated leaving his family alone in the woods. Periods of absence that were not only a nightmare to him, but more so to the mother with her two little girls, the elder of whom was about three years old. During a period of six months Mrs. Letts saw only two white women.

On account of the children it was necessary to keep a cow for fresh milk. This cow was purchased in Seabeck and proved to be one of the bug-bears of their life in the woods. No matter how securely the cow was fastened, either by rope or chain, it would periodically break away and trot all the way back to Seabeck. To get the cow back again was a two-days' job, and Letts had to figure that out of thirty days he would have to spend two days bringing his cow home again.

Ranchers used to take turns in going for mail once a week. On one occasion Arthur had been delayed and it was dark before he reached the vicinity of home. He became lost in the woods and fired off his revolver in the hope of attracting attention. He was nearer home than he thought, as Mrs. Letts heard the shots and shouted, but could make no one hear. With only one shot left in his gun for self-defense, he lighted a fire to keep off the animals, for the woods were full of mountain lions and bears. Before the night was far advanced he was found by a neighbor's dog, who ran back to its owner and, by constantly running back toward the woods, eventually led the owner to where Letts was marooned. The attempt at homesteading, like so many before and since, was a failure.

After most of the savings were gone, the family moved back to Seattle. But Letts refused to be beaten. He was not yet thirty years of age, and still possessed the enthusiasm of youth. His dream of some day being a real merchant would not down. Moreover, he now had a son, Arthur, Jr., who was born on April 28th, soon after their return to Seattle. So he took his stock out of storage, sweetened it up with some new merchandise, and rented a small store on Pike Street, starting again in the men's furnishing business. There he fought against odds that were too great for him. His capital had gone into the land. Had he inherited a business, or been able to command the assistance of rich friends, he might have had easier times, but never could have had the schooling that cut the back-log of the business that he ultimately founded. Even his pet bulldog unwittingly worked against him. Returning home one Saturday night, he said to Mrs. Letts, "Have you seen the dog?" She answered, "No, what's the matter?" He had been whistling for the dog for half an hour, he said, but could not find him in the store, so had locked up for the night. On their way to church the next morning, it was necessary to pass near the store. As they approached, they saw a little crowd of people around the window. This window had been specially trimmed the evening before with an assortment of new straw hats that had just arrived, also some very fine shirts; the choicest merchandise he had. Thinking business would be brisk on Monday morning, they walked over to listen to what comments the onlookers might be making. What they saw, however, was a tragedy. Every hat in the window had been chewed up and the shirts torn to shreds. Peacefully sleeping, on the top of the wreckage, was the bulldog.

There are men in Seattle who like to boast how they loaned Arthur Letts money to pay his rent, to keep him from being put out on the street. For two years he struggled along, only to receive what, to an ordinary man, might have been a final disaster. He was caught in the panic of 1893 and compelled to make an assignment. He lost everything he had, all the results of the years of plodding and industry and upbuilding, and, what was worse, he was left not merely "broke," but with an indebtedness. He settled with his creditors at 35 cents on the dollar, but he made a mental reservation that the day should come when he would be satisfied with nothing less than a settlement of 100 cents on the dollar. With this load of debt on his shoulders he had to start all over again.

In later years, when Arthur Letts had reached the pinnacle of success, a well-known interviewer asked him what he considered the real foundation of his success. It was a question that many successful men had hesitated to answer, but Arthur Letts did not hesitate a second. "Failure!" he answered, incisively, almost sharply; but even so, his habitual, almost shy smile softened the short answer and made it pleasant. "Failure put me through the college of hard knocks on the threshold of my business experience. It was tough at the time, but I can truly say that I owe everything to failure."

Seeking help to get another start, he secured it from a banker who had confidence in him. He bought out the bankrupt stock of John Otten of Snohomish, a growing town in Snohomish County, forty miles north of Seattle. Here he did a good business for a year, when a controversy arose to move the county seat to Everett. He foresaw that Everett would get the county seat, so again he found himself seeking a new location. He had now been ten years in the "Land of Promise," and all he had to show for it was experience, mostly bitter; but his spirit was undaunted. Fortune had indeed smiled cynically upon Arthur Letts before she took him under her wing as a favorite child.

A business man, to be successful, needs a prophetic vision. He must lift up his eyes and look far ahead. Arthur Letts had reached a point where he realized that if he were to attain anything more than a competence, he must locate in some city the future growth of which held greater promise than any he had so far located in, and where he could start a business with limited capital and "grow up" with the city.

His eyes were now turned toward California. California, since the days of '49, had been the scene of great activity. Its towns had experienced a rapid growth, yet on a very substantial basis. Outstanding among these was the town of Los Angeles, which, by reason of its strategic location, enviable climate, unlimited natural resources and progressiveness, was forging rapidly ahead. For several years Arthur had felt that Los Angeles would eventually be the city of his choice, for even at that time it was a much-talked-of town. While he was yet in Toronto, he had heard much of Los Angeles. During the years 1886-87 there was keen competition between the Southern Pacific Railroad and the recently-completed Santa Fe, resulting in a rate war that was far-reaching in its consequences. Round trip tickets from Chicago and Missouri River points to Los Angeles could be bought for as low as $15.00. The result was that large numbers of eastern people took advantage of the low rates to visit Southern California, and were impressed with the country, its climate and possibilities. This started what is generally known as the "Big Boom of Southern California," which developed into a veritable craze—a mania of speculation. Stories of sudden wealth which were like tales of the Arabian Nights, percolated to all corners of the continent, including Canada. Real estate offices were open day and night, and properties frequently changed hands at advanced prices several times in twenty-four hours. In some instances business was transacted in buildings so out of repair that during a rainstorm the enterprising boomers were compelled to hold umbrellas over themselves and their customers while negotiating a deal in climate and corner lots. When the opening sale of what was considered a particularly desirable sub-division was announced, lines would frequently be formed in front of the office two or three days in advance of the opening day, so eager was the rush to obtain choice locations and desirable corners, and $100 was no uncommon sum to pay for a good place "in the line."

On January 1st, 1888, the first annual Pasadena Rose Tournament was held. The idea of a Tournament of Roses on New Year's Day caused many a citizen in less favored districts to pause during his arduous task of shoveling snow and ask himself the question—"Why shouldn't *I* enjoy the benefits of such a climate?" More publicity, and more people talking of Southern California!

It was at this time that Arthur's friend, Geo. I. Cochran, went to Los Angeles. Arthur had gone to Seattle. But it was in Los Angeles where the foundations were being laid for the beginning of a progressive, bustling city. Perhaps the culminating point in advertising the town was reached at the Columbian Exposition at Chicago, in 1893. Here the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce had a magnificent display. Carloads of calla lilies and other flowers, as well as fruits, were shipped to Chicago and distributed to the public as they passed through the exhibit. Undoubtedly, much that the visitors saw was forgotten; but the fresh flowers and fruit from Southern California, that they carried away in their hands, was tangible evidence that here was a land so prodigal with its fruits and flowers that it could afford to ship them a distance of 2000 miles to be distributed free to all comers. It fired the imagination, and the magic name of Los Angeles was indelibly impressed on the minds of thousands—yes, of hundreds of thousands.

Seattle and the northwest held no further inducements to Arthur Letts. He wanted to turn his back on failure, and stride forward again. A little encouragement was all that he needed, and this he found in the enthusiastic letters he received from Mr. Cochran. Mr. Cochran, who is now

President of the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Co., was at that time practicing law. The suggestion Arthur received from his old-time friend, that he should come to Los Angeles, was the final spark needed to suddenly kindle within him that irresistible force that was destined to carry him to success. He came and looked the situation over, went back to Snohomish, packed up his goods, and moved down to Los Angeles.

CHAPTER IV

The Birth of The Broadway Department Store

CHAPTER IV

THE BIRTH OF THE BROADWAY DEPARTMENT STORE

LOS ANGELES, when Arthur Letts arrived, was a sprawling town of perhaps 60,000 people, recovering from the boom collapse of six years earlier—which had been augmented by the great panic of '93—and gave little indication of its amazing future. Perhaps a few items culled from the "Los Angeles Times" of that date may give some idea of the town as it then was:

E. A. Miller advertises three lots for sale, located on Burlington avenue. Street graded, graveled, sewered and sidewalked. Price $2800 for all three.

The City Council suggests a change in the Maple avenue electric car line. It is now provided with cars using old-style motors "which make a noise that is calculated to scare animals and give human beings the creeps."

The street superintendent reports that there are 212 sprinkling hydrants in the city, with fifty sprinkling wagons in use.

Gas is being used to light the City Hall, police station and various fire houses "at the enormous expense of $400 per month," complains Councilman Kingery, who advises the installation of an electric-lighting system in the City Hall.

The elevator boys in the Bradbury Building struck because their wages were cut from $40 per month to $30. Their places were promptly filled.

G. C. Edwards advertises "fine location for flats close to Sixth and Grand Avenue 70 x 160: a bargain at $3600."

California oranges are selling in the East at $2.85 per box.

Ralphs Brothers advertise: Twenty-three pounds of brown sugar for $1; 21 pounds granulated sugar, $1; salmon, 10c per can; 3 cans corn 25c, 5 boxes sardines, 25c, 5 gallons gasoline, 75c; 3 cans oysters, 25c; 10 pounds lard, 75c.

The first meeting of the new city gun club on its new grounds on the Ballerina place, just south of Westlake Park, brought out over thirty of the best shots of the city. Among those present were Ed Tufts, Jim Matfield, Archie Freeman, A. Ralphs, George Ralphs, John Schumacher, Billy Nordholt, Jim Menasco and Will Wright.

Sunday was very quiet. The saloons, generally, were closed tight although a few admitted customers at the side and back doors.

Policeman Matuzkiewiz has got himself disliked by the hackmen of the city for attempting to enforce the hack ordinance on Spring street. The officer says he has been obeying the orders of his superiors.

In casting around at this time for a method of overcoming general apathy, the city authorities had hit upon the plan of holding an annual event in the spring, known as "La Fiesta de las Flores"—the Feast of the Flowers. The Fiesta was in the nature of a general carnival, with processions, decorations, and the general carnival spirit in evidence. At night, happy throngs promenaded the illuminated thoroughfares, and showers of confetti filled the air. The greatest interest centered in the floral parade, for it was something that could be witnessed in no other city in North America; and it is certain that nowhere outside of China could such a spectacle of Oriental beauty be seen as that presented by the Chinese contingent. Their immense banners and flags and mounted draperies were striking to behold. It took 120 men to operate the great dragon that coiled along the streets. From the clanging gongs which heralded its approach to the last silken banner trailing in the dust, everything in the division was of such a description as is to be seen only in an interior city of China on a day of a great religious or civic celebration. The night parades were exceedingly beautiful. The last evening of La Fiesta was known as "All-Fools Night," when the people flung aside all care and anxiety, and in a last whirlwind of mirth and good-feeling proceeded to celebrate the success of La Fiesta. Everyone was allowed to mask, and the whole jolly show was marked by so much good feeling and innocent mirth that it was an unalloyed pleasure to behold it. As an annual event, it did much to center attention on the city from the outside, and to keep the spirit of co-operation alive within the city itself. General M. H. Sherman and E. P. Clark, brothers-in-law, were laying the foundation of the present unequaled electric interurban car system enjoyed by Los Angeles. The whole steam railroad was electricized between Los Angeles and Santa Monica, and building was started on an electric road to Pasadena.

Little notice was taken of the arrival of Arthur Letts in the business community of Los Angeles. He was practically without money, and knew few people.

On January 31st, 1896, there was sold at public auction the bankrupt stock of Karl Epstein, at 146 North Spring Street. The inventory of that stock, consisting of clothing and men's furnishings, amounted to $3,160.00 at cost. The assignee in insolvency was Daniel J. Brownstein, of Brownstein, Newmark and Louis, who were then located in the Baker Block at 344 North Main Street. The stock was purchased by J. Golliber, a well-known Pacific Coast dealer in bankrupt stocks, for the sum of $2,757.00. It was this same Golliber who had sold the stock of John

Otten in Snohomish to Arthur Letts, less than two years previously. When Golliber learned that Letts was in Los Angeles looking for a location to start in business, he immediately got in touch with him, and offered him the stock at the same price he had paid for it. Arthur Letts was very anxious to get located. The store was in a location just beginning to suffer from the migration of business southward; but, having no money, Letts could not be too "choosey." He accepted the offer, and bought the stock. No money changed hands in the transfer, for Arthur Letts had no money. Golliber's great faith in him closed the transaction. E. W. Fox, who was looking after the stock for Golliber, was allowed to remain, and thus became the first employee of Arthur Letts in Los Angeles.

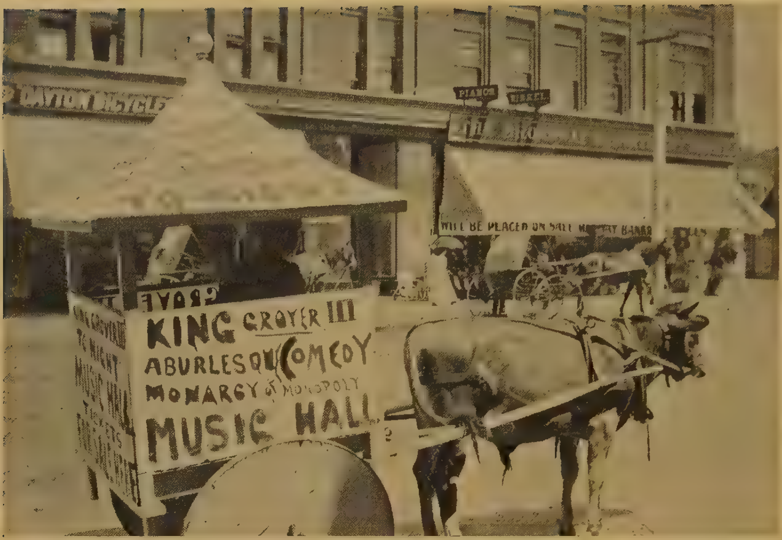
The character and location of the store not being what Arthur Letts wished to be identified with permanently, he continued the name "EPSTEIN" over the door, and used every leisure moment to study his environment. He walked the streets and observed the southward and westward trend of the city, where dwellings were being erected and business houses springing up on the verge of open fields. He had now had sufficient experience to know that the right location would be of fundamental value, and that it would be cheap even at a rental that would strain his resources, while a second-rate place would be dear at any price. In the meantime he worked early and late. He never asked anyone to do any work he was not willing to do himself. He washed the windows, swept the floor, and cleaned up stock—anything and everything to keep down expenses.

And then—Opportunity knocked!

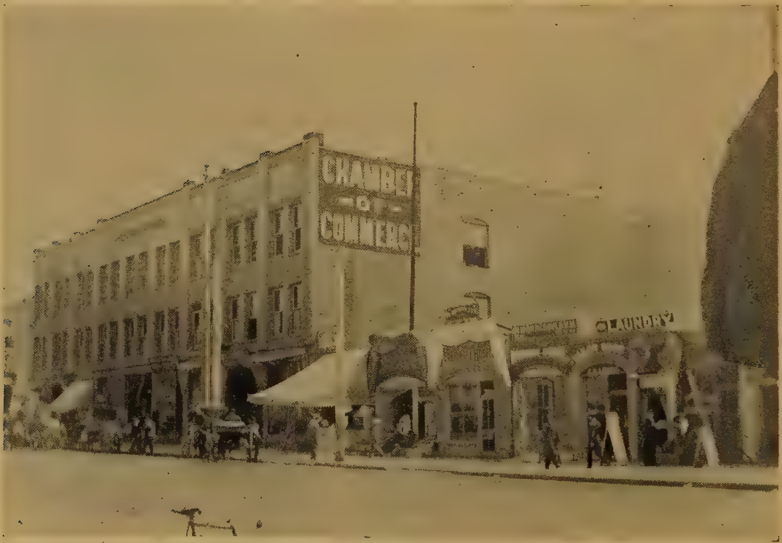
One afternoon he walked along Broadway, and came to Fourth Street. A little store on the corner, there, was

The business district of Los Angeles, ten years before Arthur Letts came to California. Here the foundations were being laid for a busy, bustling city

Broadway at Second Street, 1896. The bulk of the business at that time was transacted on Main and Spring. Broadway, below Second, was "out in the country"


KING GROVER III
A BURLESQUE COMEDY
MONARCY OF MONOPOLY
MUSIC HALL
DAYTON BICYCLE
PIANOS
WILL BE PLACED ON SALE

In the days when ox-carts creaked down Broadway. The Broadway Department Store opens for business, February, 1896


CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LAUNDRY

Across the street from "The Broadway" the Chamber of Commerce was housed, in the three-story Mason Building (now the H. D. Stack Building). The balance of the block consisted of dilapidated shacks

FOURTH AND BROADWAY, 1896

closed on account of failure. "The Broadway Department Store," read the sign over the windows—J. A. Williams & Co., proprietors. Williams, Overman and Burch had constituted the "company."

"This is going to be a great corner for business," said Letts; "I'd like to get this store." To the average business man, Fourth and Broadway was an unknown quantity, for the bulk of the business of Los Angeles was transacted on Main and Spring, the South limits of Spring Street being at Second. Fourth and Broadway was "'way out in the country," but Letts was convinced it would in time become the pivotal point of the city's retail trade.

The creditors asked for bids at public auction. The estimated value of the stock was $15,000.00. Arthur Letts saw the opportunity—but, how to grasp it without money? Grasp it? It *must* be grasped! With that determination permeating his every fiber, he talked the matter over with his friend George I. Cochran, and with Major George H. Bonebrake, President of the Los Angeles National Bank. He attended the auction, and when the bids were opened, his was $80.00 higher than that of anyone else, and he got the store. It was that $80.00 which gave him and the city the present Broadway Department Store, Bullock's, and the immense real estate holdings and other enterprises of the Letts estate.

$8,167.00 was the amount he paid for the stock. The Board of Trade granted him thirty days time on $3,167.00, but demanded a cash payment of $5,000.00. This money he obtained from the Los Angeles National Bank by convincing Major Bonebrake that he could take the money right out of the stock within the time limit and yet have enough merchandise left with which to continue business. Just the same, Major Bonebrake insisted on Geo. I. Cochran endorsing Letts' note as a guarantee that it would be paid. Arthur Letts was a newcomer, without capital and without influence; his Seattle record was against him; and the bank did not wish to take too many chances.

On the 24th day of February, 1896, at 7:30 in the morning, The Broadway Department Store—Arthur Letts, proprietor—opened for business. It was a small, one-roomed affair, with a heterogeneous collection of goods displayed upon roughly made shelves and counters—a little dry-goods, some cheap candy, a few pots and pans, and a number of rocking-horses, not so bright of color as they once had been. But a sample of sales strategy was exhibited such as helped to make Arthur Letts rich and famous. Nothing less than a "nickel" had theretofore passed for money in Los Angeles. Neither merchants nor customers had cared to "bother with small change." Letts knew the value of the dramatic, the unusual. So in his opening advertisement he named the new store and made a point of penny change: "The Broadway Department Store, the First to Use Pennies in Los Angeles." In the entire business district he could find but few pennies, and he got most of those from the postoffice. But few were needed at first, for folks literally did not know how to use them. Change was made. Customers picked up all except the pennies. The pennies were swept back into the drawer and used over again. But the dramatic impression was made, though it is a remarkable commentary on how slowly men grasp the significance of progress that for years Letts held the advantage of penny change. In after years it became the custom to give away pennies as fitting souvenirs of February 24th. Barrels of bright new pennies were obtained from the Mint, and one given to every customer after each transaction, no matter what the purchase might be.

Most of the men with whom Letts was acquainted did not hesitate to "poke fun" at him—referred to his store as little more than a junk shop, reminded him that he was entirely too far out of the business district, and pointed to the dilapidated old shacks that surrounded him as proof of the impossibility of doing business in such a neighborhood. Was it not a fact that his predecessors had survived but a scant four months, that the four other store rooms contained in the building he occupied were usually vacant? In fact, less than nine years before, the land, together with the buildings then on it, had been sold on a tax judgment for but $21,000. It was in this atmosphere of dire predictions of failure from those "who knew" that the start was made, and matters were not helped any when, the following week, the adjoining store was burned out and The Broadway's stock seriously damaged by smoke and water. A tight-fisted insurance adjuster forced a settlement for $1000—a settlement that rankled with Letts for a long time, for he felt that, being aware of his financial predicament, the adjuster had forced a settlement that was anything but just. However, Letts lost no time in running a "fire sale," and made back a goodly proportion of his loss, plus the gain of considerable publicity. He made everything count in his favor—even apparent misfortune. Nothing could daunt a spirit which did not understand the word "defeat." The store became so congested at this fire sale that it was necessary to rope off the entrance and station a policeman on guard. As customers were waited upon and let out, a few more would be let in to take their place.

Quick sales were made imperative, even with some goods turned at a loss. All stocks must be turned within a given time, was the edict that went forth. In the meantime, Letts had decided to give up his store on North Spring Street, and instructed his man, Fox, whom he had left in charge, to pack up the goods and bring them down to Fourth and Broadway. Epstein's name had never been removed from the Spring Street store, so Arthur Letts "bought out" the "Epstein Clothing Co." and featured a "slaughter sale" of the stock. The public was not permitted to lose sight of The Broadway.

By such drastic efforts his note was paid "on the dot." That was a wonderful, most encouraging, and heartening experience to the young merchant of thirty-four. He had made good. He had turned the corner.

Now began the supreme struggle, which was to continue for about seven years. This was Letts' store, his Opportunity, his Future. He staked on it every atom of brain and body energy he could muster. He began work regularly at 6 in the morning and continued frequently until after midnight. Literally, he did not quit until every task was done for the day. He was buyer, advertiser, bookkeeper, window-dresser, sign-writer, and general manager. He had only one man to whom he paid more than $12 per week, yet there were men and boys working for him then who are today wealthy and prominent citizens.

Letts knew all about financial crises—they were his constant companions. In the beginning they used to visit him once a week. Then they came around only once a month. They did not quit calling for some years. He shook hands with every one of them and then edged them off the premises. Sometimes they did not want to go, but they always did go. They were always pushed out by a crowd of business.

When it became imperative to get a little money from the bank, he invariably had to be satisfied with almost half the amount he really needed. One thousand dollars for thirty days would be the extent of the bank's liberality, for which consideration on their part 8% interest was charged. Twenty years later, there would be several times during a month when Arthur Letts would receive telegrams from New York bankers asking for the privilege of loaning him money in blocks of $100,000.00, for six months or longer, with interest sometimes as low as 3%. But that is another story.

In those early days the chief characteristic of the store was pressure of work—sales—get the goods turned into money! There was no let-up or pause. Letts forced himself and he forced others. He cut all corners. Every hurdle was cleared to make way for success.

Stock was piled on counters, empty boxes were strewn around everywhere; even piled on the floor. The sidewalk was used as freely as the interior. The doorway would be flanked on either side by large baskets containing, probably, thread at one cent a spool and neckties at five cents each. From sturdy nails in the woodwork were suspended the folds of the various fabrics presented for view in the show windows. Parasols, arranged in jaunty attitudes, frequently served as a fancy touch. And at all times price-tickets were a prominent feature. Customers rummaged for themselves. If a man sought an undershirt and found what seemed to suit, he would likely have to hunt up somebody to take his money and wrap up his purchase. How Letts could possibly make money seemed to be a mystery to everybody.

At night, the cash on hand was counted and just enough "change" reserved for next day. Including the bank balance, there might be $400 on hand. The bills due were spread on the counter and Letts would run over them, selecting some for payment—part-payment, in most cases. His running instructions would sound something like this: "Send this man $25; pay this man off, he's cranky—won't buy from him again; let this one wait—he's good-natured and doesn't need the money anyway; send this man $10; pay these people $50—tell them more will be sent in a few days," etc., etc. When the jottings made by his clerk reached nearly to $400, the rest of the bills would be shuffled together and put away. This was the only course, for there was no more money.

The little cash book, still preserved, tells the story of those early struggles and sacrifices. There, in the "daily cash on hand," is the waving line that dwindled at times to within a few dollars of zero, rising and falling with the tide of business in those uncertain years before Letts stood squarely upon his two feet. That book is a human document of fears, doubts, economies and sacrifices, as well as of hopes and ambitions and everlasting faith in the future.

Letts fought, and he worked night and day against odds almost impossible to realize. Obstacles became merely difficulties to be overcome, and he trusted to his instinct to show him the best way to overcome them. He knew that the hardest kind of work was back of every success; that nothing in the world of business just happened; but that everything was brought about, and only in one way —by a willingness of spirit and a determination to carry through. He had long since exploded for himself the misleading and comfortable theory of luck: the only lucky people, he found, were those who worked hard. To them, luck came in the shape of what they had earned. He never took a dollar from the business, except sufficient to cover his modest household expenses. He lived with his family at 1121 West 9th Street, on the corner of what is now

Stewart, in a small cottage for which he paid a rental of $28.00 a month.

He believed absolutely in the final outcome of his business: where others saw mist and failure ahead, he saw clear weather and the Port of Success. Never did he waver; never did he deflect from his course. Besides, there were goods to check and display; bankrupt and fire stocks were constantly arriving; new space was being occupied—first, the next store; then the next to that—and the new space must be fitted with shelves and counters, such "fixtures" being made then and there out of empty packing cases. All cardboard boxes were saved, and used for making price cards. After the store was closed, new goods had to be unpacked and checked, and price cards written and affixed ready for the next day, before the task was dropped, whatever the hour. Letts went to bed whenever the day's work was done and not before. He required very little sleep and he took as little as required. Probably he did not average more than six hours. He ate whatever he liked and as much as he wanted. He smoked to some extent but not a great deal; and, also, he was not a total abstainer. In short, he lived at this time about as did the average man, excepting that he put work first. He had practically no recreation and did not seem to want any. Outdoor games of all kinds did not interest him. For one thing, athletics and sports for the business man were not so prominent then as now. Golf, and similar competitive means of health exercise, were looked upon as silly amusements, only for those who hadn't something better to do.

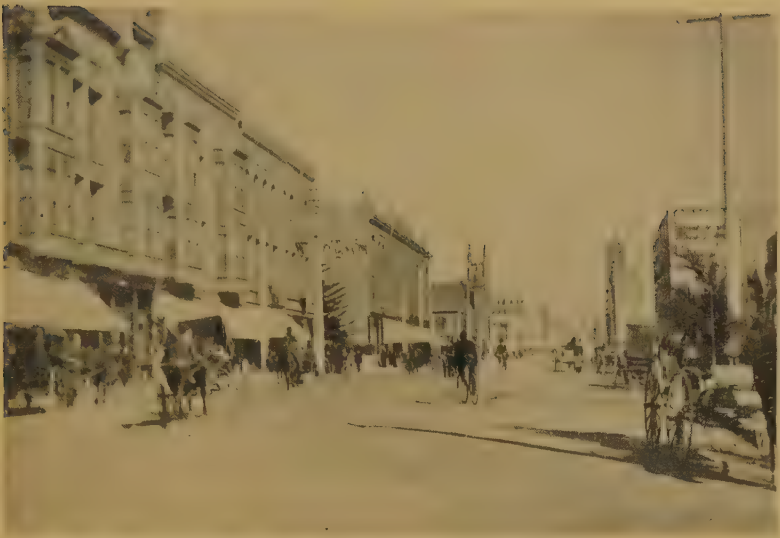
In the meantime, the store continued branching out as the business grew. First one wall and then another was knocked down. In 1889, just three years from the day it first opened to the public, The Broadway Department

Store was occupying all the six stores that constituted the ground floor of the Hallett and Pirtle building, together with a building in the rear, in which was placed the crockery department, with a stock-room above. Instead of fifteen employees on the payroll, there were now upwards of a hundred.

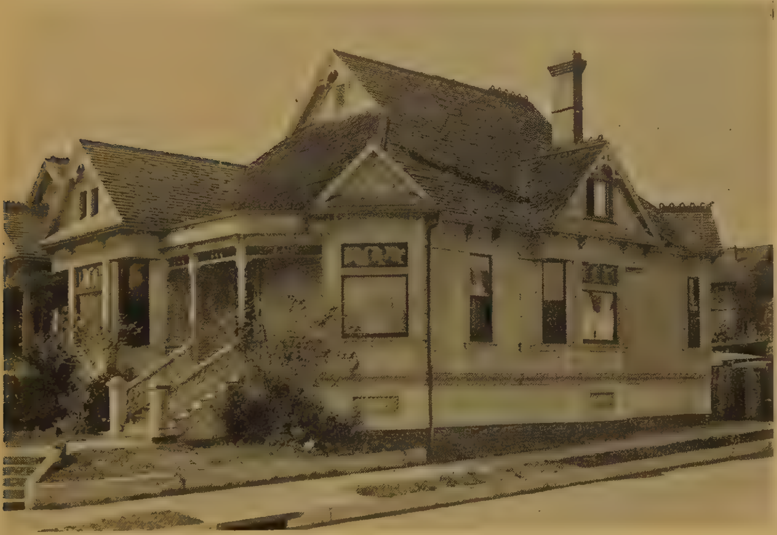
As Letts prospered, the harder he worked. His affairs grew over night; they spread in various directions; he was forced to work, and work, and work, without cessation. He was so busy during the day that most of his thinking was done in the solitude of the night. He formed the bad habit of the midnight brain. Probably he realized the price he was paying for success, but he felt that he had to do as he did. But one day he collapsed and was taken to the California hospital. Here, in the quiet of the hospital, he had time to reflect. He saw that his task had become too great for any one man. He must delegate authority and responsibility to others.

When he returned to the store he lost no time in trying out the mettle of some of his men by giving them various opportunities to demonstrate whether they had the kind of ability he required. He began to anticipate the time when his business would be so large that he would have to delegate the buying to specialists in charge of each department. He realized that no one knew what the public demanded, or what the public would probably buy, so well as those who were dealing directly with the public day by day.

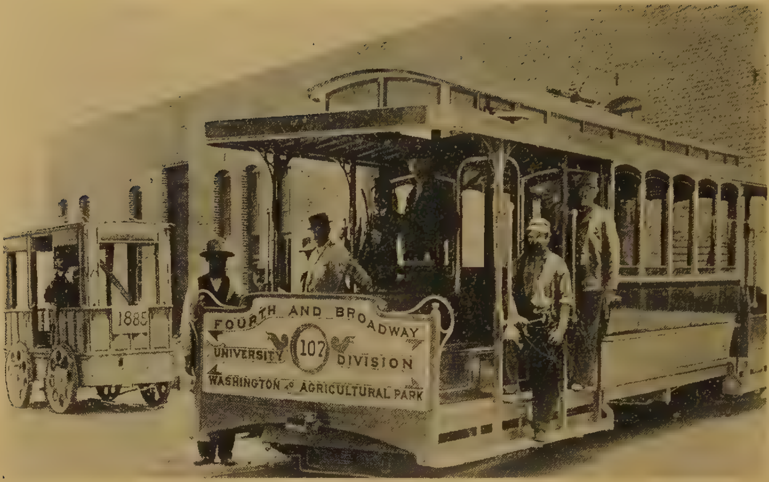
Department stores in those days were not the popular marts of trade that they are today. To insist on cash for all goods disposed of, to refuse credit even to the best families in the city, and above all to have one fixed price plainly marked for everything, was something that not everybody



Broadway—looking north from Fifth Street, in 1896. The Wilson Building (left foreground) and the Hallett & Pirtle Building, in the corner of which The Broadway Department Store was located, were the two "most imposing edifices" south of Third Street



ARTHUR LETTS' FIRST HOME IN LOS ANGELES
A small cottage on the corner of what is now Ninth and Stewart


1885
FOURTH AND BROADWAY
UNIVERSITY
107
DIVISION
WASHINGTON TO AGRICULTURAL PARK

The first slogan The Broadway Department Store adopted, was, "All cars transfer to Fourth and Broadway"

NOTE—Small car to the left was first electric car used in Los Angeles

Garments of other days. A showing of "Cloaks and Suits," 1899

Millinery of 1899. A window display of which The Broadway was very proud was accustomed to. Different stores had different ways of doing business. Some marked their goods at a price, and got it if they could. Others marked their goods with one price and then found some way to do the trick of changing the price, or having the same article marked another price. Bargaining was frequently conducted before the show window outside the store, or in the store, as the opportunity for conversation occurred, and "beating down" the original price was a favorite custom. The longer and more vociferously a customer urged a reduction, the greater was the reduction made. Many people regarded the merchant as an enemy whose chief ambition was to cheat them to the fullest extent. There was little recognition of the idea that business could be conscientiously conducted with a high motive.

Aristide Boucicaut, of the Bon Marche, the great Paris store, was the first merchant to introduce absolutely fixed prices. The Fair of Chicago was the first American department store to follow his example; and John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, and Eaton's of Canada, together with several leading institutions, were early exponents of this proven plan. It was adopted by Arthur Letts because he knew it to be fundamentally right. It made it possible for a child to buy in The Broadway Department Store, instead of the shrewdest member of the family. All the child needed was the money and a description of the article required. If a customer was not satisfied with a purchase, he or she had the opportunity to receive an exchange check, good at any time for the amount of the purchase. If any wished, they could have their money returned. Arthur Letts wisely counted, not on casual sales, but on thoroughly satisfied customers. He wanted them to come back, and he knew they would come back if they had confidence that his prices were fixed and reasonable. That he was perfectly justified in his conclusions time abundantly showed. He catered principally to the working people of Los Angeles. The working people had the ready money. That was what he needed in order to carry out his plans. He turned the searchlight of his thoughts upon publicity in a way that revealed its tremendous value and importance as a factor in business, and the many channels through which it could flow. As a result, he began at once to advertise in a way that was as astonishing and bewildering to his competitors as were his other business methods.

His first efforts seem crude in the light of today, but they fulfilled one law of advertising: they attracted attention and then drove home the point he wished to make.

Two days before The Broadway first opened for business, he made an advertising contract with the "Los Angeles Herald," to extend over a period of one year. During the first month he spent for advertising one-third of the amount he had agreed to spend during the twelve-month period. "Carpet Slippers, 11c; Infants' Shoes, 9c; Men's dress Shoes, 79c; Ladies' Shoes, 25c," were some of the "tremendous bargains" that greeted the reader's eye! Again we read, "On Wednesday The Broadway Department Store will sell Douglas and Mean's $3.00 shoes for $1.50." And, on another occasion:

> "STOCK BOUGHT FOR 25c ON THE DOLLAR
>
> "The Broadway Department Store has bought the stock of H. Phillips, Spring Street, for 25c on the dollar, consisting of Dry Goods, Fancy Goods, Notions, etc., etc., and will shortly place the stock on sale at tremendously low prices."

When the holiday season came around, he was right there with an ad inviting the children to come to The Broadway and see a "real live Santa Claus." Santa was to be loaded with presents, and would give a bag of candy free to every little boy and girl who came to see him. On more than one occasion appeared the following:

"NOTICE

"To whom it may concern: Any persons representing themselves as agents from the Broadway Department Store are frauds, as we have no agents selling goods.

"ARTHUR LETTS, Proprietor."

Never for a moment was the public permitted to forget that The Broadway Department Store was doing business at Fourth and Broadway.

At this time Arthur Letts talked little except business even to those who were closest to him in business. His speeches were brief and abrupt, and he invariably used the minimum number of words to convey his meaning. His manner was not understood by strangers. The story has been told that on one particularly busy morning he had been compelled to interview several applicants for positions, each bearing a letter of introduction from a minister. Just as his patience had reached the breaking-point a man stepped up and handed him testimonials from two ministers. Quick as a flash came the remark, "We don't work on Sundays. Haven't you a reference from some one who sees you on week-days?" He was never really happy unless in the midst of action. If things in the store seemed quiet, he could always be relied upon to stir up something. Perhaps he would decide to have a Remnant Sale, and would keep everybody busy until late into the night cutting bolts of cloth, silks, cottons, etc., into "remnants"; for it had been discovered that remnants of goods—of a dress length, for example— would always sell if they were marked at a reasonable price.

When a man was given a title of Department Manager, that did not mean that his efforts were to be confined entirely to that particular department, as all had to work on the principle of "Do whatever there is to do." The line was not drawn anywhere. Being a "Department Manager" did not relieve a man from getting down to the store at seven o'clock in the morning; sweeping out the store, sweeping the sidewalk on Broadway and Fourth Street and, when the time came, assisting in scrubbing the floor. It was this willingness of everybody to do his or her part that largely made it possible to keep the operating expenses of the business in those early years at a percentage approximately one-half what it is to-day, notwithstanding the fact that now-a-days, during a big sale, more cash is taken in during a period of thirty minutes than was taken in at that time during thirty days of toil.

Thus it was that, contrary to many prophecies and in the face of innumerable obstacles, The Broadway Department Store took root, held its own, and finally broke into blossom. As it proved, the times in Los Angeles were propitious for the venture. Whether another man possessing the same initial mental, physical, and spiritual capital that Arthur Letts possessed when he first came to Los Angeles could make good in our times, would be impossible to say. In all probability he would have to size-up his problem in an entirely different way and attack it accordingly.

"One ship goes East, the other West,
By the self-same winds that blow.
'Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale,
That determines the way they go."

CHAPTER V

Making Dreams Come True

CHAPTER V

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

THE rise, development, and operation of a great business like that of The Broadway Department Store would be comparatively uninteresting, unless we knew something about the man who actually elaborated the business. It is the human element which arouses our curiosity. It is the struggle against conditions, the battle against odds in the fight for success, that engages the interest of the onlooker. To the one actually engaged in the business, the romance may not be so apparent as to the outside observer. By giving a close-up view of the many revolving cogs and wheels that enabled the machine to operate as a complete unit, it is hoped that the dramatic interest will not be lessened.

The year 1900 found The Broadway Department Store occupying the entire ground floor of the Hallett and Pirtle Building. In all there were nineteen separate merchandise departments, and the active head—very active—of these departments was filled with confidence, zip, ginger and pep; with a personality that inspired the first of these qualities in his customers and most of the others in his employees; a definite policy and goal; indefatigability (a long word, signifying—purchase a good alarm clock and wind and set it late at night to sound its clarion call to duty early in the morning); an ear so hung that it could be kept pretty close to the ground; an eye that could see four jumps ahead all the time; a nose that could stand a good deal of hard usage on the grindstone, and a mouth that could say "Yes" or "No" and then shut up and let the decision go at that.

This man had adopted for his motto:

"*Don't Worry—Watch Us Grow,*"

a phrase that became "a household word" in the community.

The department store rests upon no legislative right, and enjoys no natural monopoly. It can exist and thrive only by serving the general community. Competition waxed fast and furious. Arthur Letts sold the kind of goods which the majority of the people wanted. He endeavored to give his customers good values in popular-priced merchandise, the very best which could possibly be sold for the money. Perhaps it was in the "door dressing" of The Broadway and neighboring firms that the battle of competition waged fiercest. Should one combatant announce an "unprecedented value" in prints at five cents a yard, Arthur Letts would promptly thrust out several pieces of equally attractive appearance with a card blazoning forth their price as four cents a yard.

His unusual methods and, withal, their success, aroused, especially at first, much jealousy, envy, and malice that frequently vented itself in public print. In the papers of these early days such advertisements as these appeared, inserted by rival establishments:

> "Not selling for cost, but at prices as low as our neighbor's professed cost prices."

> "What a monkey sees, a monkey does, etc., etc."

Again, in big type—

READ THIS TELEGRAM

Chicago.

——— Clothing Co.,
Los Angeles.

We do not know anything about The Broadway Department Store. We have never sold such a concern, and no one else but you for Los Angeles. You can brand anything else as a falsehood, and publish this telegram over our signature.

HART, SCHAFFNER & MARX.

Note: We are the only handlers of the above make of Clothing in Los Angeles.

——— Clothing Co.

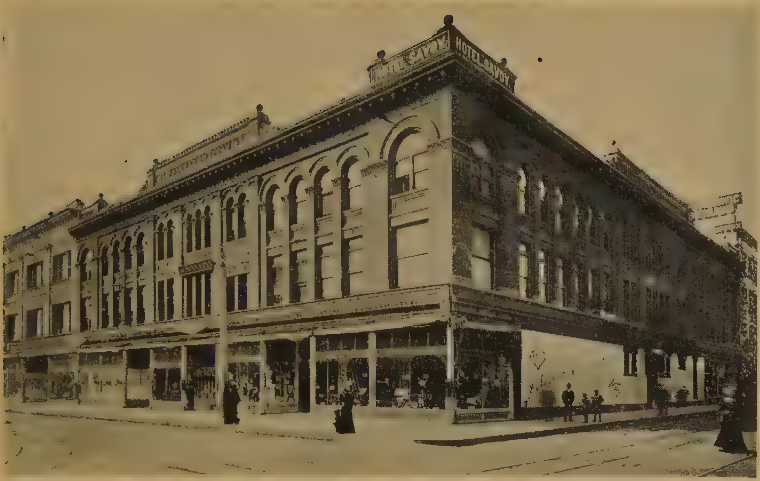
The way Arthur Letts would meet such an advertisement would be to fill a window with Hart, Schaffner and Marx clothing, with the labels turned prominently to view, so that all who passed by could see. He revelled in that type of free advertising. Sometimes competitors would endeavor to reach him through the jobbing houses, and he would find it almost impossible to purchase certain articles. On one occasion he wrote to a fellow-merchant in Chicago:

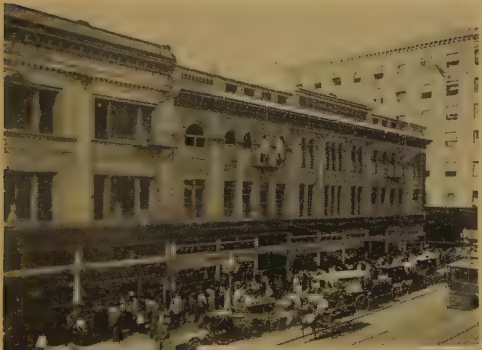
"I thought I was living in a free country, but some of the jobbers of this city would endeavor to make it anything but free. Imagine buying a bill of goods and then have the house tell you what you should retail them at. Does it not make your blood boil? It does mine. Usually persons purchasing merchandise and paying for it consider it their own, to do with what they deem to their best interests. But some of the jobbers of this city do not think that way. They seem to think that after they have sold their merchandise and gotten their money, they still own the goods to the extent of telling the purchaser what he is to do with it. I have given them a merry time for the last three months, and shall continue to do so, gradually making it still warmer as we proceed. I was raised in an atmosphere of freedom, and it is a mighty hard proposition to be dictated to, at least, I find it so. I dislike lawsuits or I might have entered into a struggle here to enlighten the jobbing houses that they are restricting business. In other words, they are illegally boycotting me—but enough of my troubles. However, I am quite able to fight my own battles, and I merely write this to you as I thought these would be the most interesting words I could say."

Of course, The Broadway Department Store was "knocked." It has been "knocked" repeatedly since that time; but the people continued to make their purchases at The Broadway in increasing volume, and they paid in cash. If they thought the price of an article too high, they went elsewhere and tried to get it cheaper. If they failed to do so they came back, and Arthur Letts had made some more friends. They knew that the price asked of them was the price fixed for all and was therefore fair to all. If the goods were not as represented they could bring them back and get something else. Nothing was sold under false pretenses.

The great cry at this time was for "more space." The phrase "Watch Us Grow" was something more than a motto: it was a condition, and a condition that had to be met. Fourth and Broadway as a business location was rapidly vindicating the remarkably good judgment Arthur Letts had shown at the outset.

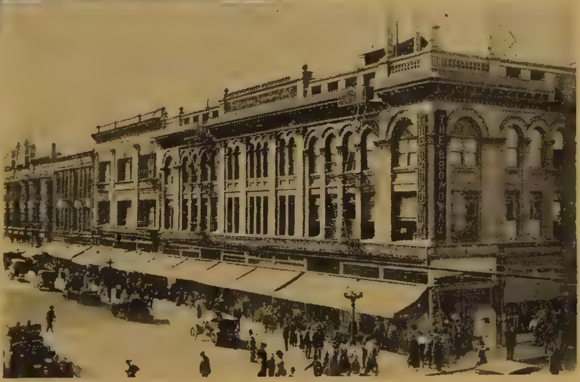
In 1901, the adjoining three-story Hellman Building was taken over; in 1905, the upper floors of the Hallett and Pirtle building—which were then occupied by the Hotel Savoy under a long lease—were secured at considerable expense; and in the latter part of the same year the Slauson Building, which adjoined the Hellman Building on the South, was annexed as a part of the Store. The Slauson Building had been occupied by Adams and Hellinghausen, grocers, and the Paris Glove Co.; the upper portion being used as an apartment house, known as the Narragansett. All were





THE PHRASE
"WATCH US GROW"
WAS MORE THAN
A MOTTO—IT
WAS A
CONDITION

Below—The Broadway Department Store in 1906



Top—In 1901, the Hellman Building, adjoining the Hallett and Pirtle Building, was acquired

Center—In 1905 The Broadway took over the upper floors formerly occupied by the Savoy Hotel

Half Yearly $1.00 Pants Sale.
Half Yearly $1.00 Pants Sale.

WINDOW DISPLAYS THAT ATTRACTED ATTENTION
TWENTY YEARS AGO

swept aside in The Broadway's onward march. The new additions gave The Broadway Department Store a total floor area of 145,000 square feet. This phenomenal growth in itself attracted attention.

It had long been the custom amongst dry-goods stores to feature an "opening" every Spring and Autumn. The show windows were gaily decorated, and each store would hold "open house." These "openings" usually lasted for a period of three days, during which time people came to *look* at the new merchandise on display, but not to buy. This sort of thing did not suit Arthur Letts. The function of a store was to *sell* merchandise. So he decided he would handle the situation a little differently. The Broadway would hold its "openings" in the evening, and the next morning the goods would be ON SALE. The store closed at five P.M. and reopened at eight P.M. All the clerks were in their places in the beautifully decorated building, but no goods were sold. These "night openings" attracted attention far and near. Broadway had the appearance of fiesta-times long before eight o'clock, and for hours traffic was blockaded by the crush of people. Always the mayor, or some other prominent man or men, would be present to participate in the ceremonies. At the Spring opening in 1903, Governor Pardee opened the Store at eight o'clock from his office in the Capitol at Sacramento, the button which he pressed having been connected with the doors by Postal Telegraph wires. Immediately after inaugurating the celebration, Governor Pardee sent the following telegram to Arthur Letts: "Highly appreciate the honor extended me to open your store by wire. Wish you every success in the future." Mr. Letts replied to the Governor's message: "Many thanks for your kindness. Thousands of Los Angeles people waited for your message."

With its lavish decorations, the mighty throng, the exhibits and the music, the building more resembled a fair or exposition than a department store. It was a scene of loveliness, of light and of happiness, and undoubtedly seemed very real to the many little cash girls and boys, who were dressed out in their best for the occasion.

It took a score of policemen, in addition to the store's staff, to direct the human streams so as to keep them from conflicting. More than thirty thousand people passed through the doors that evening. The total population of Los Angeles, including visitors, was estimated at 130,000. As a test of popularity it was a marvelous showing; indeed, the response to the store's invitation was so warm and so cordial that it seemed as if every visitor had a very friendly feeling toward Arthur Letts and his enterprise.

It was not until 1910 that the merchants of Los Angeles entered into what was then the novel and original plan of a United Fashion Show—three special days set apart, when all the "openings" took place simultaneously—and the day of scattered and drawn-out "openings" became a thing of the past.

As his business increased, Arthur Letts had many dark days and cold, relentless struggles against forces unsympathetic to his nature. He knew that he was born to fight, but he felt equally sure that he was born also to win—not merely money, business, social prestige or public eminence, but the Greatest Good to the Greatest Number, a principle which he himself enunciated as a maxim in the business.

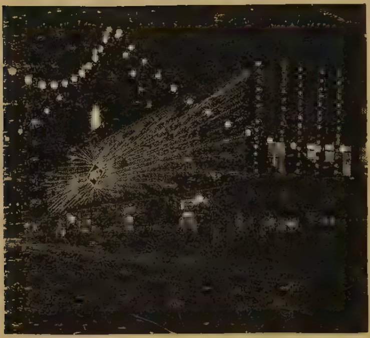
With the added space and increased number of employees, he found it necessary to spend more time within the confines of his office. Some of the men would go to him and beg him to go back on to the floor. "It isn't the same, now," they would say. So he would go back on the floor, part of the time, each day. The result was immediately noticeable. The shoulders of his employees would straighten, their eyes flash, and their movements pick up speed. It wasn't because they were afraid of being fired. It was because they caught the snap and ginger that emanated from their chief: Personality, if you please!

Business management, in essence, means leadership; therefore the ideal business executive must possess certain fundamental qualifications. These are character, creative imagination, sound judgment, courage, a sense of humor, and the ability to co-operate, to understand men, to organize; receptivity, courtesy and expert knowledge. Such a merchant was Arthur Letts. Moreover, he had the peculiar faculty of being able to take a man from one department, put him in an entirely different one, and make him a success in it. He knew that it was skill in being able to handle men and women, rather than technical knowledge alone, which counted in making a department successful. He knew well that there were a great many employees who knew more about merchandise than either he or their managers, and yet who never would make good managerial material. And he also knew that if a man possessed the essentials for a successful manager it was only a question of a little time and application before he would gain the technical knowledge necessary to administer his department. Also, he had the rare good sense to allow his subordinates to express their individual talents without undue restraint, thereby getting the best that was in them. Naturally, being human, he was not infallible, and occasionally made mistakes. For a long time he questioned whether women had sufficient experience in the world of business to cope successfully with the problems of a buyer or department manager. It was not their ability to select merchandise that he questioned, so much as the effect on the salespeople; for he held it to be a truth that women will work infinitely better, under the direction of a man, than of a woman.

If his buyers made mistakes and sometimes bought too heavily, or purchased stock which didn't take the public fancy, it was their problem to dispose of it. That was how they learned. He never held such mistakes against his men; he had made too many himself not to know that man is not omniscient and that the shrewdest buyers make miscalculations. Nevertheless it was a hard school that Arthur Letts ran, but no harder than the school he had been brought up in himself; and he never asked of any man nearly as much as he asked of himself. The conditions he found were not simply department store conditions; it was ordinary, passive human nature which Arthur Letts saw, and he started in to make extraordinary, active human nature out of it. The big thing is that he never failed to give ability a chance. After he had given the chance, he might discover that the ability was not of the kind that he most needed. He valued an educated, intelligent man very highly, but he appreciated intelligence more than education. No man could ever tell what Arthur Letts considered important or unimportant, for he had a most remarkable memory for detail. He had no scale of relative importance. He kept the big balls and the little balls all up in the air at once. He held that nothing was too small to be done well, and although he could not supervise every detail, the man looking after those details never knew when Mr. Letts would land in his department—for he never announced his coming in advance. And he was as apt as not to come in the middle of the night, just to see in what condition a man left his desk or department at the end of the day.

ARTHUR LETTS, 1904

The Broadway became noted for its night illuminations during fiestas and conventions



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The business was developing rapidly into the now well-known organization where each department is run as a separate store with its own staff and its own chief. Specialization was taking place everywhere. There were now carpenters to put up partitions and make alterations, instead of the sales staff as in the earlier years. There were electrical engineers as well as mechanical engineers. Even the office force was beginning to become specialized, one section looking after one thing and one another. Arthur Letts had an almost unreasonable belief in the great future of Los Angeles. He saw no limit to the possibilities of his business, although he realized that much of the developing must be done by his deputies. He knew that he must keep his hand on the wheel, regulate the speed and direction of the craft of which he was the master, and keep a weather-eye open for squalls. He knew that in unity there is strength, and he carefully nurtured and cultivated "The Broadway" spirit. He realized perfectly well that if each part of the complicated machine was properly looked after and made to work smoothly, the whole was sure to operate satisfactorily. He believed that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points and that two plus two make four—that a thing was either right or wrong. He would not tolerate a twilight zone. He got that viewpoint from his father, a stern, exact and exacting man, who never forgot to say, as he sent the boys back to do over a chore or to give an extra polish to the back of their shoes as they started to church: "Right is right and wrong is wrong."

"It makes all the difference in the world whether we put truth in the first or second place," so runs the motto to Lord Morley's Essay on Compromise. And Arthur Letts made it his business to make truth the first of The Broadway's great foundation stones.

Truth, courtesy, liberality and value. Those were the foundations upon which the great business was erected, and Truth was made the Corner Stone. A department could present no claim against a manufacturer because of faulty goods or breach of contract unless the statement was substantiated by the office. Nor was a buyer permitted to bring any undue pressure to bear in obtaining merchandise or in any transaction to drive or coerce. Manufacturers were requested to send invoices to cover "overages" as a matter of routine, just as claims would be made for shortages. If a railroad company under-weighed a freight shipment, a request would be sent in for an additional "expense bill" to cover the amount due them. The office files are full of such correspondence.

His instructions to his men were, "Buy goods as cheaply as you can, but be honest, truthful and straight. Say what you mean and mean what you say." Truthfulness in advertising, truthfulness in the dealings with wholesaler or jobber, truthfulness in all dealings with the customer over the counter—giving the facts of the case—was the chief of the underlying principles that have guided this business to the high pinnacle it now occupies. For truthful dealings beget confidence, and confidence begets business; therefore growth and development under these principles were as natural as the unfolding of a flower under the sun's rays.

Today, in order that Truth may be kept in the first place in every phase of "Broadway" service, there is maintained a system of research, inspection and vigilance. Merchandise is tested, values are investigated, salespeople are instructed and advertisements are scrutinized: all to the one end, that things shall be as they were represented to be by their makers, and that they shall be represented by the Store as they actually are. Misrepresented qualities, exaggerated statement, or unfair pricing have little possibility of existence under the merciless eyes of the Merchandise Office.

Courtesy was found to be one of the most difficult acquirements to instill into the rank and file of employees. Great and vigilant efforts were necessary to develop this branch of the store's work, in order that it might be one of the prominent factors in the development of the business. Arthur Letts realized from the start that the best way to build up "good-will" was to endeavor to please every customer, to see that wrongs were quickly righted, mistakes rectified, money cheerfully refunded, and merchandise exchanged with good grace. Nothing would raise his ire quicker than discourtesy to a customer. Numerous letters in his files indicate that he was never too busy to follow up personally any complaint of discourtesy. Following is a sample of many such letters:

February 2nd, 1905.

Mrs. C. E. Bundy,
Mojave, Calif.

Dear Madame:

I am in receipt of your letter of February 1st and have noted contents. I have personally investigated this matter, as I do not like to receive a complaint, and I can readily see that you had just cause. In looking up the correspondence—copies of our letters to you, I was very much surprised at the tone, and I have brought the parties severely to task. I also regret that we are entirely at fault, and I sincerely apologize for the trouble we have put you to in this matter.

Upon receipt of your first letter, the matter was handed over to our chief inspector, with instructions to investigate and report. His report, turned in to the office, was that he could not find the articles as per the first letter written to you, and the second letter, which you have also received. The answer to the same is the one of this morning's mail, which I personally took charge of, and the outcome of the investigation is that I find your package precisely as you state, at our Checking Department, and, as before stated, the fault is with the chief inspector, who took for granted what one of his wrappers told him, without investigating.

The worst feature of this case is the manner in which he replied to your letters and I assure you, that never again, as long as he is in our employ, will he be allowed to do this. My instructions are most emphatic to every employee—that the utmost consideration and courtesy be extended to every patron of this house. I assure you that his action is infinitely more annoying to me than it possibly could be to you, as I pride myself upon the good treatment given to all our friends.

I have instructed the office to forward your package at once, per express, prepaid.

Sincerely regretting that you should have had any cause for complaint, and most particularly regretting that you should have had a double cause—and further, I assure you that by overlooking this error, we will endeavor at all times to please you. Kindly acknowledge receipt of package and oblige

Yours respectfully,
Arthur Letts.

Here is another letter, quite interesting, indicating the care Arthur Letts exercised in giving a courteous answer to such a commonplace event as a request for work. It was addressed to a man in Tunbridge Wells, England:

June 19, 1905.

Dear Sir:

Answering your communication of May 28th, wherein you make application for a position, I would say that this is a very difficult matter for me to advise you what to do. Ordinarily, I always advise an Englishman to stay in his own country unless he is prepared to rough it. So few Englishmen really care to knuckle down to hard work. The term hard work in this country means something so different from hard work in your own country. An American puts every available energy into his business. For instance he gets down to business many times before 7 o'clock in the morning and will stay until 11 or 12 o'clock at night if there is work to do, taking only a few minutes for meals. To any ordinary Englishman, this would be killing. In fact, few of them care to do it.

This is certainly a great country to succeed in if one comes prepared to strain every energy to make a success. Again at your age it is a very difficult thing to start again and that is where I would advise you to consider deeply. Candidly, I don't think you could stand the strain. If you were a young man starting out in business, you could adapt yourself to circumstances much easier. To the easy going man this country is no place. The work that it has taken to build up my business, should I tell it to you, you would put it down for an American yarn. You could not believe it.

The west is nothing to be compared with the eastern states of America. You have undoubtedly heard of the strenuous life. The word "strenuous" is scarcely strong enough to fit in to the western life.

Of course, I would like very much to see you and if it was to your interest, would advise you to come, but not having met you, and knowing little of your ability, I am unable to advise. It is quite likely that I shall be in England next year, probably in the early part of the year. If you still have the inclination, then I will try and meet you, and we will talk the matter over.

In writing this letter, I am looking at things for your best interests, for I firmly believe that to make a success here at your age, the strain would be greater than you could stand.

When I was over in England two years ago, I talked with a number of Englishmen, some of whom had been to America. One Englishman particularly I remember stating these words, "I would much rather live the life of an Englishman than to become a millionaire in America at the cost that it takes." He meant that he would rather live the comfortable easy English life with a fair living than become a millionaire if he had to do all the work that it takes in this country, and after all I think he was wise, for the very atmosphere here is filled with a desire to accumulate Dollars. Almost everything is lost sight of for wealth.

Yours very truly,
ARTHUR LETTS.

No doubt the patience of salesmen and saleswomen is often severely and unnecessarily tried. It is not always easy to be courteous when a customer comes in and asks for hose, and after being shown some stockings, says, "No," he wants "hose for the garden"; and, after he is shown a lot of different water-hose, eventually makes it clear that it is agricultural hoes that he wants. A lady comes in and asks the floorwalker for some "tablets." He conducts her to the stationery department, where she is asked whether she desires them "ruled" or "plain." She is shown different sizes, kinds, and the latest in lined stationery. "No," she explains at last, "I cannot tell you the name, but it's something for dyspepsia."

Another woman answered an advertisement for linen paper and bought a box. She saw another ad and purchased another box. A few days afterward she returned. "Are you sure this is linen paper?" she asked. "Well, I'm quite positive it must be more than half cotton from the way it sticks to my pen!" These were daily occurrences; yet the fact had to be impressed on the minds of the salespeople that by being courteous and using tact many sales are consummated that would otherwise be lost.

Liberality was the third of The Broadway's foundation stones. On the back of every purchase check appeared the broadest of guarantees:

> "Each Sales-slip filled out is as much our personal guarantee for the rightness of goods and prices as though issued personally. We count this personal responsibility and the confidence it begets as the basis of our success."

"Goods Satisfactory or Money Refunded." This was not a privilege hedged about with qualifications. "If you do not like what you buy when you get it home; if it wears, tears or breaks before a reasonable period of usefulness; if in any way it proves to be other than it was represented to be, return it to the Store and change it, or get your money back." Such is the literal translation of this outstanding clause in The Broadway's constitution. Liberality is a sound business principle. The best advertisement for any business concern, or for a professional man for that matter, is a satisfied customer. Most people talk and act as a result of their own personal experiences. If they are pleased with their purchase they often tell others; if they are not, they almost invariably "knock" the trader who has not given them satisfaction. It isn't the sale made today which counts particularly in any business. It is the sale that is so satisfactory to the purchaser that he will want to return and buy again, that ensures success.

As the business developed, liberality became more and more solidly cemented to the other foundation stones—liberality of service to patrons, providing comforts in the way of rest and public service rooms, accommodation desks, telephones, hospital, nursery, and bureau of information, etc.; sparing no expense that the Store's representatives might reach, most directly, the markets of the world, so that its patrons might be supplied, first, with the best the markets had to offer: in brief, a business built upon broad-gauge lines, public-spirited, and entering into all movements for the betterment of the community generally.

Supreme in all that went to make a strong and substantial growth was VALUE. Gradually the quality of merchandise carried in stock was improved, and its variety increased, in order that people in almost any walk of life might find exactly what they wanted in the store. "Prices everlastingly the lowest" was a phrase associated with the business from the day it started. In fact, these words stood out conspicuously on the front of the building. Yet Value, as we term it now, means more than just the lowness of price; it means the embodiment of Quality as well. To be able to supply merchandise from the markets of the world at prices based on the very lowest possible margin of profit —this, surrounded by the other foundation stones of the business, Truth, Courtesy and Liberality, provided a trading place that was thoroughly reliable, a trading place ever keyed to concert pitch in the interests of its patrons. Said Arthur Letts one day, "What though we be honest, liberal and courteous?—VALUE must be uppermost if we are to succeed." Success to him was not the accumulation of money. It is true he wanted money; but he wanted it to build up a great business and make it the people's store, to give them full value for their money, to make them feel that The Broadway's name was a guarantee of honest values.

Indicative of the careful manner in which he watched each department manager is a letter written to a buyer who had left for New York before Mr. Letts had had an opportunity to go over the department's record with him:

February 2nd, 1904.

Dear Mr. ———

Looking over the sales of the past year I find that the total volume of business transacted in your departments entirely satisfactory. You, in particular, are to be congratulated upon the able manner in which you have handled your departments, and on having shown such a splendid increase in sales.

As you know, our methods are progressive, and I not only believe, but fully expect, that the coming year will show still greater results. Our weak point in the past has been that in increasing the bulk of business we have lost sight of profits, and you know full well, as does every person with business experience, that the ultimate aim of every business enterprise is to make profit. Almost any person of average intelligence can sell a large quantity of goods in a short space of time, provided that they sacrifice all profit; but what we wish to do is to sell a great quantity of merchandise and make a fair profit on the transaction. This cannot be accomplished by cutting prices on regular goods. Jobs must be secured which can be advertised and sold at far below the market price, and still pay a profit. You are now in a position where you may obtain with very little difficulty underpriced merchandise which will provide strong incentives for sales, and at the same time keep the profits of your department up to the necessary point.

Please understand that there is a necessary margin of profit, for, should a department be permitted to run year after year at a loss, it not only cuts into the profits of the better managed departments, but establishes a precedent which is not only disagreeable but decidedly dangerous. It is with no spirit of fault finding that I am dictating this communication, but I wish to warn you of the dangers that may beset your path in the near future, and put you in a position where you may guard against the faintest possibility of closing another season's business without showing a reasonable profit.

See to it then that you buy plenty of jobs. My advice would be that you put at least two thirds of your appropriation into underpriced merchandise. While it is quite necessary for you to keep within the purchasing limits that have been allotted to you, bear in mind the fact that our outlet for underpriced merchandise is practically unlimited; and that the department that provides the Advertising Manager with the most ammunition is the department that in nine cases out of ten will transact the greater proportionate amount of business.

It seems quite strange to me that three department managers of the house always have at their command goods purchased with the object of bringing trade. Without mentioning names I congratulate these three department managers who receive more consideration from the advertising department, not through any personality but simply because they have the merchandise at the critical times at the right price.

Another point which I wish to call to your attention is the method of marking merchandise which has been in vogue in some departments in the past, which I consider totally wrong, and which positively must stop. The method to which I refer is that of marking a fictitious price on goods as a blind, or really with the intention of deceiving the customer. I must insist that every price on the ticket be genuine. If the article sells regularly in stock for $10.00 and is then reduced to $7.50 I think it is perfectly legitimate to leave the $10.00 mark in sight —simply run a line through it with a pen and mark it $7.50; but on goods that were never intended to be sold for more than $7.50, it is not good business policy to mark a fictitious figure. While it is undoubtedly not practical at the present time, I believe in the near future it will not only be possible but decidedly practical for us to hold all merchandise at the reduced price and never raise the price on an article that has been reduced. What I mean by that is if we have a piece of ribbon in stock which is being sold at 15c and decided at any time to sell it at 10c, that it should remain at that figure until the lot is closed out and under no circumstances raise the price from 10c to 15c.

While you are in the East I would suggest taking a few hours and going through the large department stores, seeking all the information along these lines possible. At all times the information can be had if properly sought after, but go to the fountain head, present your card, and tell them who you are with. The name of this house is so well known that it gives you prestige enough to secure what information you are seeking. I would suggest if you do not know how to present this matter, that you get a letter of introduction through some commission house or the Dry Goods Economist. We shall look for results along these lines upon your return.

Trusting that you may have a prosperous trip, I am, sir,

Most truly yours,
ARTHUR LETTS.

Dict. A. L.

The credit of The Broadway Department Store was now above question. Manufacturers and jobbers had found they could trust the honorable methods and the business judgment of its proprietor. When any business or professional man or woman reaches that point in life's journey, the gates of great opportunity invariably open wide.

Was it "mere sentiment" that led to the next step? Judge for yourself.

In 1902 Arthur Letts began to pay off his Seattle creditors. He had waited for two things: Until he had intrenched his own business, and until the old bills were outlawed so nobody could precipitate the whole load on him at once. Mind you, there was no legal obligation whatever for this to be done, and from the point of view of many business men there was no moral obligation either; but with

Arthur Letts it was a matter of honor; it was his own sense of business integrity that made this course obligatory to him. Little by little he sent those creditors payments, sometimes only $100.00, as he required every dollar he could scrape together to carry along his growing business. By the spring of 1905 he had paid all of his old debts in full. It was one of the proudest days in his life when he mailed out the last of those checks to his old creditors.

Then came that memorable eighteenth of April, 1906, and the earthquake and destruction of San Francisco by fire—a disaster which overwhelmed many of his old creditors and submerged many more. Arthur Letts went to the stricken city on the first relief train that left Los Angeles. As he walked through the wholesale district when the conflagration was over, and saw the utter ruin and devastation that extended for miles, he immediately saw that here was an opportunity for him really to repay those men more nearly "in full"—to pay them something more than could be measured in dollars and cents. Twelve years had elapsed between the time of his failure in Seattle and the day when the last of those old debts had been paid. Money, he figured, was worth 6%. So with considerable of an effort he added 72% interest to former principal sums everywhere, and paid that too.

Arthur Letts always said no special credit should attach to this act. He reasoned that those men had trusted him in good faith, that his misfortune had delayed payment which was justly due them, but that such delay was all he was entitled to expect or take.

But those who saw that mighty disaster as a close-up, realized how and why this act stood out in such high relief, coming, as it did, so unexpectedly, and when the need was so great. We do not wonder that the San Francisco Board of Trade formulated a recognition of it, had it engrossed on parchment and presented it to this unusual debtor with appropriate ceremonies.

BOARD OF TRADE OF SAN FRANCISCO
San Francisco, May 15th, 1906

It appearing that about fourteen years ago

MR. ARTHUR LETTS

whilst engaged in mercantile pursuits in one of our neighboring cities, suffered business reverses by reason of which he was compelled to settle with his creditors at thirty-five cents on the dollar:

AND IT ALSO APPEARING that twelve years later, having greatly prospered as the proprietor of

THE BROADWAY DEPARTMENT STORE IN LOS ANGELES,

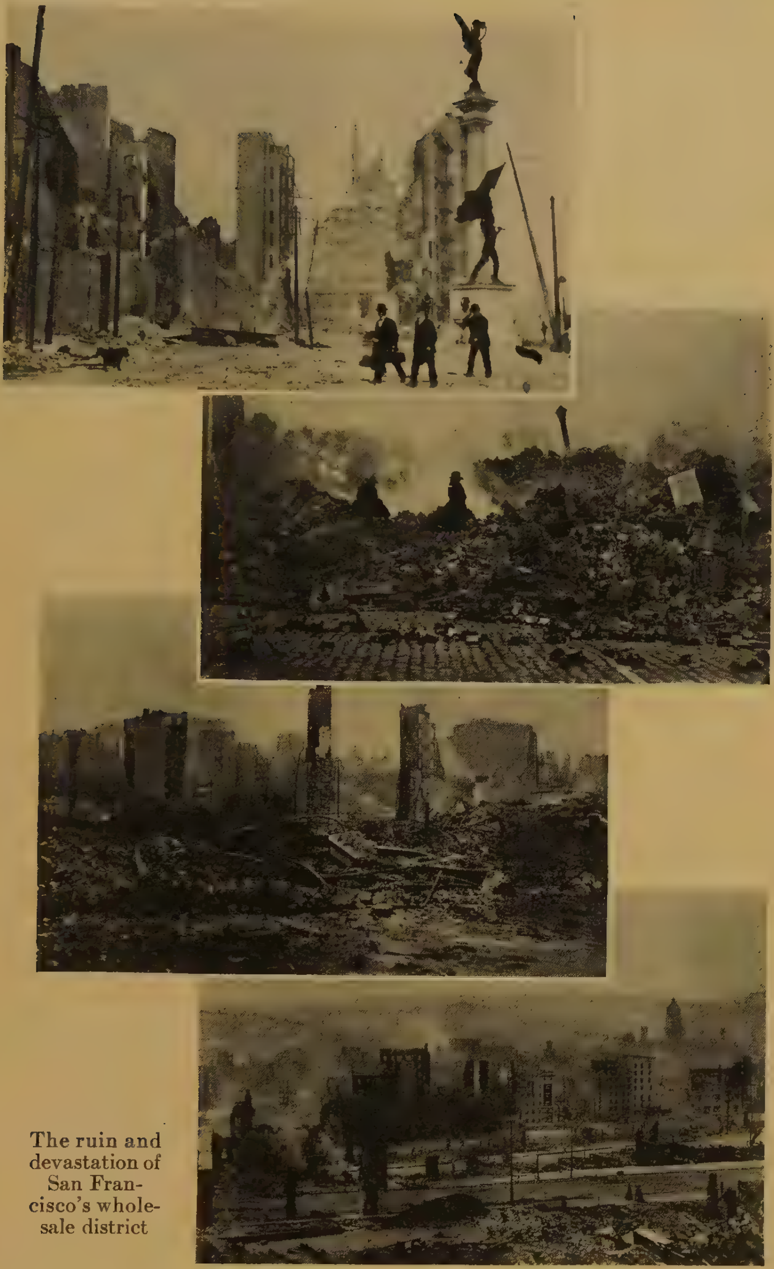
MR. LETTS paid the said creditors (without suggestion or request on their part) the remaining sixty-five per cent of his cancelled and legally discharged indebtedness to them:

AND IT FURTHER APPEARING that when our beloved City was stricken by an appalling calamity, Mr. Letts, promptly realizing the magnitude of the losses sustained by his former San Francisco creditors, generously remitted to them twelve years interest, which amounted to seventy-two per cent of their original claims,

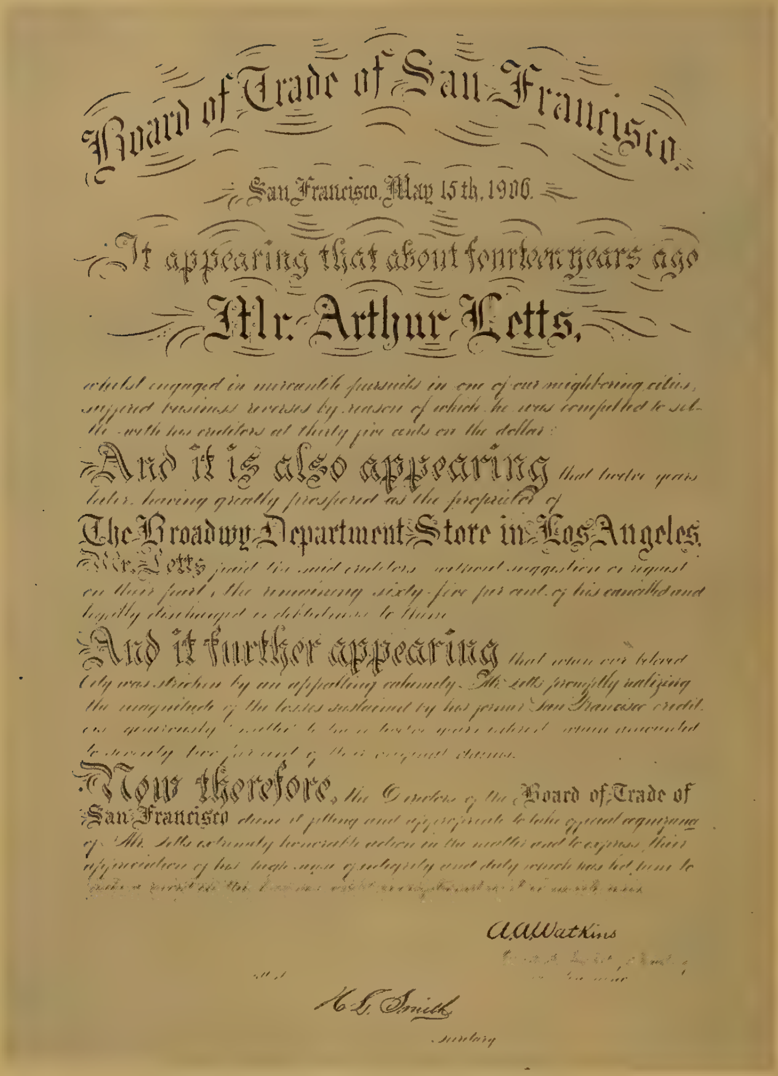
NOW THEREFORE, the Directors of the Board of Trade of San Francisco deem it fitting and appropriate to take official cognizance of Mr. Letts' extremely honorable action in the matter and to express their appreciation of his high sense of integrity and duty which has led him to make a record in the business world as exceptional as it is meritorious.

(Signed) A. A. WATKINS,
President, Board of Trade,
San Francisco.

Attest:
(Signed) H. L. SMITH,
Secretary.



The ruin and devastation of San Francisco's wholesale district



Board of Trade of San Francisco.

San Francisco, May 15th, 1906.

It appearing that about fourteen years ago

Mr. Arthur Letts,

whilst engaged in mercantile pursuits in one of our neighboring cities, suffered business reverses by reason of which he was compelled to settle with his creditors at thirty five cents on the dollar:

And it is also appearing that twelve years later, having greatly prospered as the proprietor of

The Broadwy Department Store in Los Angeles,

Mr. Letts paid the said creditors without suggestion or request on their part, the remaining sixty-five per cent. of his cancelled and legally discharged indebtedness to them

And it further appearing that when our beloved City was stricken by an appalling calamity, Mr. Letts promptly realizing the magnitude of the losses sustained by his former San Francisco creditors generously [illegible] which amounted to seventy five per cent of their original claims.

Now therefore, the Directors of the Board of Trade of San Francisco deem it fitting and appropriate to take official cognizance of Mr. Letts extremely honorable action in the matter and to express their appreciation of his high sense of integrity and duty which has led him to [illegible]

A. A. Watkins

[illegible]

H. L. Smith

Secretary

APPRECIATION OF A REMARKABLE ACT

In writing later to Joseph Kirk, the attorney for the Board of Trade, Mr. Letts said:

"Words would fail me if I should attempt to express my feelings in this matter. At the best I thought I was only doing what was right.

I would esteem it a great favor if you would extend to each and every one of the interested parties, my most sincere thanks for their kindness in thus expressing themselves to me. This Scroll is something that will remain with me as long as I shall live, and is a remembrance that is prized most highly. I doubt if there is any other person in the United States who has such a unique token of kindly feeling from a Board of Trade as the one you have so magnificently presented to me.

Again thanking you, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,
ARTHUR LETTS."

Apropos of the San Francisco earthquake, it was most surprising how many people in the East had gained the impression that Los Angeles also must have been considerably damaged. Business men of this city received many anxious inquiries from distant friends. Such letters that reached Arthur Letts were promptly answered—mostly in the following vein:

J. P. Logan & Sons, April 25, 1906
New York City.

Gentlemen:

Answering your favor of the 21st inst., wherein you make inquiry whether our building and business is safe: I want you to distinctly understand, and all New York if it is possible, that there is nothing the matter with Los Angeles.

We did not feel the earthquake; in fact, we knew nothing about it until we saw the account of it in the newspapers. Los Angeles is forging ahead and is going to be the greatest City on the Pacific Coast. Business is fine, and every prospect of its continuing so.

"Put this in your pipe and smoke it." We are all well and doing lots of business.

Yours very truly,
ARTHUR LETTS.

It was about this time that Mr. Letts adopted a plan that was far-reaching in its results.

He investigated neighboring rentals in detail, and when he assembled the figures and computed what such literally staggering charges against his own departments would mean, he hesitated. "I cannot carry such a burden," he thought; "useless to try it." Then he recalled the crucible through which he had lived in getting started and realized that the prospective burden was as nothing to the actual load he had just begun to shed. So he advanced rentals against all departments to such sums as he would have had to pay for similar space at prevailing rentals on Broadway; and he advanced those charges as rentals continued to enhance, whether the departments were run by managers or himself. As all departments were his own care for several years longer this might seem like taking money from one pocket and putting it into another.

It would have been just that, had he stopped where most men stop; but he carried the practice to its logical conclusion, drew out the actual cash each month and put it into a fund separate and apart from his business, just as if he had paid it to a separate landlord.

It was his sound practice with respect to taking money out of the business that saved him from the disaster that, otherwise, surely would have come as a result of an essentially unsound confusion of fixed and working capital. From the very beginning he had regarded a profit not at all as a personal perquisite, but as something to put back into the business to make it bigger and better. He put back the profits with supreme confidence. He was always willing to go down with the ship.

1906 was a banner year for all business. Prosperity abounded on every hand. Thus, in the early days of 1907 everything seemed to be "sitting pretty" and the outlook was distinctly "fair." Permanent prosperity seemed to lurk just around the corner. On March 4th, "Bullock's" was opened to the public under circumstances which will be told in another chapter. As the possessor of two such mercantile establishments, all his own, Arthur Letts might well be pardoned for feeling rather secure and fairly well satisfied.

One day in August, he appeared suddenly on the floor of The Broadway, when everybody thought he was in New York, and began to stir things up. Department managers were shaken up—some shaken out. Orders were issued to stop buying, absolutely. Lines not indubitably profitable were closed out. Sweeping stock reductions were put on in every section. To old hands it seemed like old times. The "Old Man" had taken hold with vigor reminiscent of early struggles, and had said not a word to anybody.

In New York, in July, mixing with financial men, he had received some indication of a coming tempest. His New York buyer's office was running along under full sail, liberal orders coming through from both The Broadway and Bullock's; everything set for continued prosperity and normal growth. With a revival of the old feeling that safety lay in doing things himself, he wired for statements from Los Angeles, and was disturbed to find he was extended away beyond his calculations. Without wasting any time, he stopped orders in New York, wired all representatives to pass no orders unless O. K.'d by himself personally, rushed home, and put on the brakes.

He was none too soon. When the storm of the financial panic of 1907 broke, during the last days of October, in all its fitful, terrific fury, those around him began to realize what the shake-up was about. Demands, aggregating staggering totals, were coming from all directions. Gray hairs were born overnight during that hectic time. Rumors were flying thick and fast. Speaking at a banquet on October 30th, Arthur Letts remarked: "Well, friends, for a sick man who is supposed to be in a sanitarium with three nurses holding him down—I think it is to be three, maybe it is more—I am a pretty healthy blossom, and I do not believe there is any sanitarium in this country that would allow me to break into it. I never felt disposed to get into one. If I have the mental disease that I am credited with I am very sorry that the seventy-five to eighty millions of American citizens haven't got the same trouble. I do not think it would hurt them any. I venture to say that if a good many of you gentlemen here tonight had followed my footsteps you would be weary. I have not been resting, I assure you, although apparently I have been quiet."

That last shake-up accomplished two things. It carried him through the most critical time since his failure, and it welded his organization into a perfectly balanced machine. His executives learned thoroughly what all merchants must learn who succeed—that no business is large enough or strong enough to take chances on over-buying. During those trying months Arthur Letts discharged nobody except those who plainly could not be made to dovetail. He reasoned that his men had been taught from that experience, and he wanted those about him who would know what to do in future.

He was keenly observant of his workers,and he did not hesitate to rebuke in whatever way he thought most effective. He was a quick walker. One moment he was seen, the next he was out of sight. On one of these quick tours of the store, he saw a customer waiting at a counter while a group of salespeople were gathered at the other end, laughing and talking. He quietly slipped behind the counter, waited on the customer, handed her purchase to the now-silent group of salespeople and asked them to have it wrapped, and then went on his way.

His powers of observation were remarkably acute. He missed nothing and he unhesitatingly drew attention to everything which needed correction. A cloth lying on a piece of furniture in a corner would be sure to draw forth some remark, as would the appearance of dust on a glass counter-case; or other apparently trifling matter. This was only incidental to observations which were much more important. He was keeping his eye on the stock and the salespeople.

Passing through the suit and cloak department of the store one day, he walked up to a suit and looked at the price tag. "This is wrong; the figure does not represent the value," he remarked. Sure enough, the price was off \$5 or \$6. That night all the employees of that department remained to "check-up," to see what was wrong.

That single mistake was all that could be found, and nobody ever knew how it happened; but "the Old Man" discovered THAT ONE.

A little incident that, perhaps, will illustrate his utter disregard of convention occurred while making one of his frequent tours through the store. He quietly observed that the women patrons who were indulging in some soft drinks at the soda fountain did not have a railing on which to place their feet comfortably, and he suggested to the man in charge of this department that a railing be installed, in order to make it more comfortable for the patrons of the soda fountain. The soda fountain man literally threw up his hands in horror, and gasped, "Why, Mr. Letts, that would make it look like a saloon!"

"Don't worry what it will look like," rejoined Arthur

Letts. "Our first care should be to provide for the comfort of our patrons." The railing went on.

Sometimes it seemed as though he possessed the uncanny faculty of peering into the innermost recesses of his men's minds, and reading what they had left unsaid.

He did not like to have, on shelves and in stock-rooms, merchandise which did not move, locking up money which should be working, taking up space which could be used for other purposes, and constantly depreciating in value. "Get rid of them," was his slogan. Anything which was hanging fire he had no use for. "Turn it over"—"Keep the stock moving!" were his constant adjurations; and he left it to the heads of the departments to act. Consequently many quite unusual sales were inaugurated by The Broadway Department Store, of which the greatest of all, perhaps, was Bargain Friday. For a long time Friday had been the poorest day in the week from the standpoint of sales. This condition must be changed, decided Arthur Letts, and changed it was. He ruled that merchandise should be placed on sale on Fridays at a lesser price than on any other day in the week. If the standard price of an article is one dollar and people can get it for eighty-five cents on one particular day or under certain circumstances, they experience a peculiar satisfaction in being able to save fifteen cents. As George G. Nasmith states in "Timothy Eaton:" "A woman loves to get a bargain in a French imported dress; a millionaire may experience exactly the same satisfaction in purchasing a great work of art cheaply; while nations will bargain with other nations as to certain great 'trade openings.' It is only a question of degree. The underlying love of a bargain is universal, as the trader in Central Africa thoroughly understands when he throws an extra pair of ten-cent bangles and a necklace of glittering beads into the pile when purchasing from the native a couple of elephant tusks worth a small fortune." It wasn't long before Friday became one of the busiest days in the week.

It was back in '99 when the first "Dollar Shoe Sale" was launched. This sale was continued for many years, until a time came when it became impossible to buy shoes that could be sold for a dollar a pair without incurring tremendous losses. The custom was to run the sale for three days. As early as 1907, forty thousand pairs of shoes were disposed of in the three days. Thousands of persons would congregate outside the store before the doors opened, necessitating the engagement of special police to patrol the sidewalks and handle the crowd. The space devoted to the sale had to be roped off, and the people admitted in groups. There was not room for all to sit on chairs and benches. Hundreds sat on the floor. Buyers had to fit themselves. All the poor, dazed clerks could do was to make out sales-checks and receive the money. All day long the crowds surged in and out. It was like the swarming of a hive of human bees. Many a poor woman with an oversized family looked forward to this event when she could come down town gripping a few dollars, made up of nickels and dimes, and return home with sufficient footwear to last for another year.

When the "Clean Sweep" sale was in its early years, it was ushered in by the sale of brooms at 9 cents each—customers to carry away their own brooms. No one in the streets could fail to know when this sale was in progress. For hours, on either side of Broadway, there would be a steady parade of people, each with a broom balanced blithely on the shoulder. It seemed as though the old nursery rhyme was no myth, and the cobwebs were about to be swept from the skies for sure. Some used their brooms as parasols while walking on the sunny side of the street. Many a man with a military mind was tempted to give the command "Column left" or "Column right." Brooms were everywhere. If a person boarded a street car, he would be sure to see a number of people on their way home, hugging brooms. Any visitor to the city must certainly have gained the impression that the people of Los Angeles entertained high ideals in regard to cleanliness. "I haven't the slightest use for a broom," said more than one woman in the crowd, "because I live in a furnished apartment and it actually contains an individual broom, as well as a Jap to wield it; but I figure that brooms at this price are just as good as money in the bank." Strange, how some minds work!

More than twenty years ago, Arthur Letts established a strong claim to the gratitude of California fruit growers. In those days the great difficulty was to find a ready market for the products of the ranches. This was particularly true of raisins and oranges. "The Broadway" took up the subject as a matter of State pride. The object was not to make money, but to popularize the fruits of California. In two days ten thousand one-pound packages of choice raisins were sold at cost price. A carload of oranges was placed on sale, and in one day 50,000 oranges were sold. The selling of these large quantities of fruits from counters ordinarily devoted to widely different lines of merchandise caused a great deal of unusual interest at the time.

Today, the character of merchandising has changed somewhat, and only three great sales have survived as annual events. The Annual Clearance is held in January; and during the latter part of February the Anniversary Sale commences. July brings the famous Department Managers'

Sale—perhaps the greatest sale of the year. One day each month is known as Greater Broadway Day, a day set apart on which the whole store organization is concentrated on the distribution of greater values to its patrons. During these big sale events, the individual purchases made by customers often exceed one hundred thousand in number during a single day.

Though all the new ideas in the store did not originate in Arthur Letts' brain, his was the brain to grasp the merit of a new idea; and, if it had value, he saw that it was given a fair trial. It was for him to search for the kernels of grain in the mass of chaff which passed through his hands from time to time. He was not always right in his decisions, but he had the courage of his convictions and never hesitated to give a new idea a thorough trial if he made up his mind that it was worth it. Instead of depending solely for ideas upon himself and those comparatively close to him, he placed all over the store suggestion-boxes into which any member of the organization might place his or her idea; and he gave monthly cash prizes for all suggestions that could be adopted. There was not one in his employ, no matter how humble, from whom he would not accept a suggestion with gratitude—and with emphasis on the gratitude. Even if the suggestion was not particularly valuable, he accepted it in the spirit in which it was offered. He was always anxious to hear about any new ideas that his buyers had picked up on their travels, and they were encouraged to be on the watch for new things and to tell about them. He decided that a complaint was truly a suggestion leading to an improvement and, therefore, today both complaints and suggestions are on the same basis. He wished to have the brains of all those working for him concentrated in making the business better.

Arthur Letts possessed a directing type of mind that could plan many details, but could execute few of them with neatness. And that type of mind is very unhappy when it has to pore over petty-detail tasks. Many things irked him. He was essentially direct and straightforward. His directness was very disconcerting. It was impossible to evade answers to his questions. If he thought anyone was trying to take advantage of him, he did not hesitate to tell him so, either orally or in writing.

As an indication of what little effect "threats" had upon him, the following letter is interesting:

Mr. C. H. K.,
New York.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 27th ult. received, for which many thanks.

I quite agree with you with reference to Mr. ———. He applied to me for a position as manager of this house. The type of man did not appeal to me, besides as I told him, I am loyal to the men who are loyal to me, and the good positions in this house are for them. Mr. ——— informed me that if I did not hire him he would open up a department store here, and run me for all he was worth. I told him I would make it interesting for him. I do not like a threat of this kind, although I laughed it off, and I expect when they do get started things will be lively for a while. The dollar does not appeal to me as strongly as the principle, and if Mr. ——— thinks he can take this business away from me, I will surprise him. I certainly shall be around and awake all the day long.

The public will probably derive some benefit when things get started along these lines.

Thanking you for your kindly interest, I remain

Yours very truly,
Arthur Letts.

Mr. Letts' independent spirit frequently provoked friction, particularly so with certain Union Labor delegates.

He had a great admiration for the working man, but could not tolerate interference with his business. On one occasion, when a boycott had been placed on the store, he wrote to a friend in reply to a letter of sympathy:

> "Would say regarding the labor troubles that the union labor people, most unjustly and thoughtlessly I am sure, placed this House on the unfair list. It does not worry me, as I am well aware that they cannot injure this business. I have paid no attention to them, although they have vilified me very much in their weekly paper. Some kind friend has laid the marked papers on my desk; presume they wanted to call my attention to the fact. It does not affect my business any. As for the Union taking me up, the matter is silly and absurd. They tried to do something of this kind, but I gave them to understand in plain words that their trouble was not mine, that I was able to attend to my own business, and wished them to do the same.
>
> You say they are very bitter against me. That is because I intend to manage my own affairs, and will not, under any circumstances, stand for any dictation from them. I thought they had had enough experience with me when they called a strike some six or eight months ago among the carpenters. As for their statement that I am a Citizen's Alliance man, the thing is also a lie. I have never joined this association and do not intend to and have never given one dollar towards it. Please do not worry about this, as I am not."

That the Union had been in the wrong was evidenced by the fact that, not long afterwards, Mr. Letts received a letter from their Secretary admitting that they had made a grievous error in declaring a boycott on The Broadway Department Store.

Success only too frequently breeds enmities, and Arthur Letts was sometimes the subject of attacks in the public press. He could rarely be induced to take note of what others said of him. However, he was human, and once in a while would resent some particularly unjust criticism, as witness the following letter to William Randolph Hearst:

Mr. W. R. Hearst,
Editor,
"Examiner."

Dear Sir:

Regarding the article in today's "Examiner" that I had made certain promises to the representatives of Union Labor, I beg most emphatically to state that I did nothing of the kind.

From the time this boycott was placed upon The Broadway Department Store, which, bye the bye, was the spite of an individual for some imaginary grievance, I have firmly stood for my individual rights, feeling assured that sooner or later the working men would learn of the injustice, and remedy the error.

I told them that I did not care a "tinker's damn" about the boycott, and was quite sure that the greater body of working men were not in sympathy with it. I have the greatest respect for the whole body of working men, and regret that an individual without principle can lead them into an error of judgment. The committee who called upon me admitted the injustice of this boycott, and fully understand the individual responsible for it. Mr. Flynn, one of the committee, called upon me this morning, and said that he regretted that the "Examiner" should have published a statement that was not in accordance with the report the committee made to the Union. If you will read their report, you will readily see that I made no promises, none being necessary.

The Broadway Department Store stands for justice and asks for the same treatment, reserving the right to conduct this business in whatever manner I may deem proper; in other words, I allow no dictation, claiming the right of an American citizen, with all his God-given privileges and freedom.

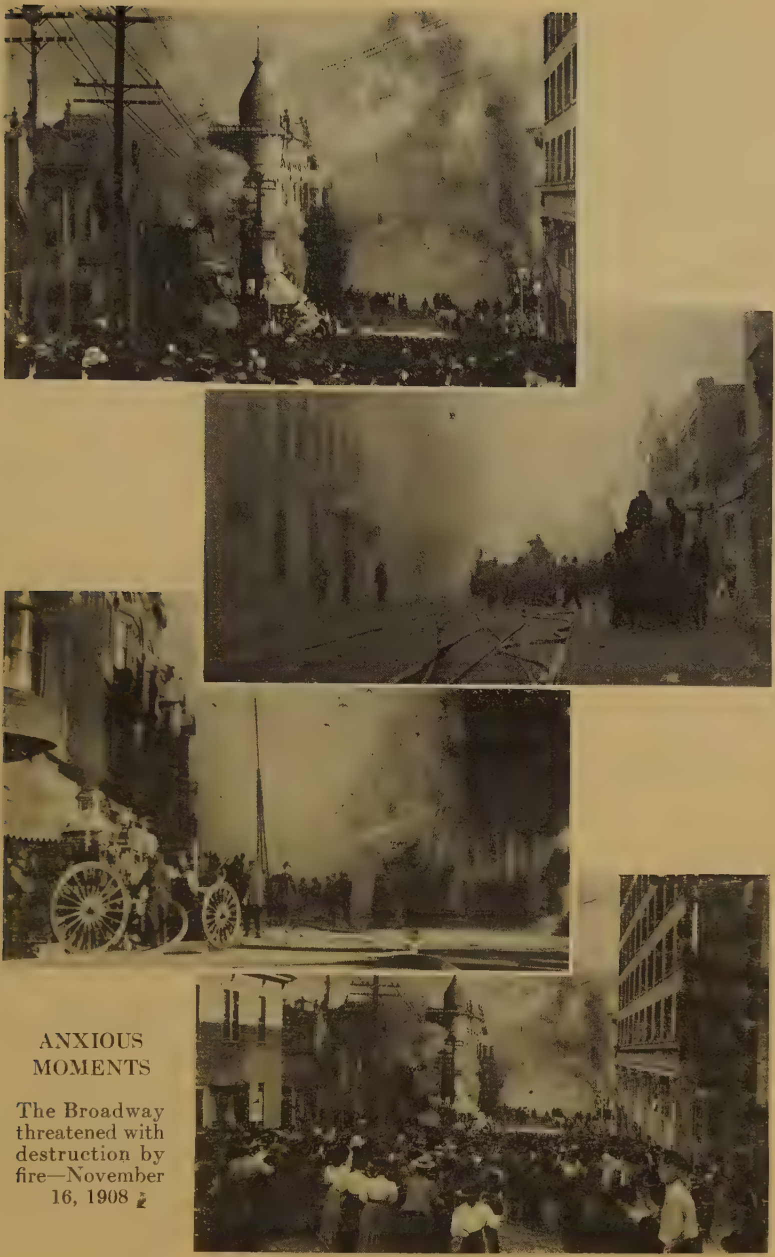
You will kindly give this the same prominence in your valued newspaper as you did the Builders' Union, and, thanking you in advance, I remain,

Very truly yours,
Arthur Letts.

As one would expect in a man with such a powerful and unique personality, his likes and dislikes were most decided. There was nothing neutral, nothing negative about his character. His feelings on matters that interested him were deep, and when he was wrong, and believed he was right, he was apt to be unreasonable. But, as he mellowed in later years, he grew less rigid in his beliefs, and once remarked to an old friend: "I have come to the conclusion that I cannot judge other men by my standards."

At one time a disastrous fire threatened The Broadway Department Store. It was in the early afternoon of Monday, November 16th, 1908, that smoke was observed issuing from the basement of the Los Angeles Pacific Railway building, which adjoined The Broadway on Fourth Street. The alarm was quickly given, and the Store's private fire department had eight lines of hose in action when the city firemen arrived. It was one of those fires that held a thrill every minute. So dense was the smoke that at the very outset it was necessary to remove the customers and many of the clerks from the store. The employees then settled down to the work of saving as much stock as possible and beating back the fire. With handkerchiefs bound about their nostrils the men held hose lines into the advancing flames, while the women assisted in removing stock. In the basement, the volunteers were worked in reliefs. Sixty men held back the flames at the fire doors between the two buildings. It was in the basement of the burning building that The Broadway had its receiving department and chief reserve stock-room. The surrounding streets were black with spectators. It was the feeling of apprehension that held the crowd. All saw the possibility of a great conflagration, and watched the fight of the firemen to keep the fire within the walls in which the blaze started. Everyone knew that if once the flames escaped from the control of the fire fighters, millions of dollars would be involved. The crowd followed tensely every phase of the battle of man against the element, and wondered if the latter would win and swing into The Broadway Department Store and then into other adjoining market places. It was a great fight, and more than three hours elapsed before the outbreak was brought under control. There was not one spectator who had not thought The Broadway Department Store was doomed. As indicating the feeling of the people toward Arthur Letts and his business methods, an anecdote is told that, when the news went out to neighboring towns that The Broadway was burning, an anxious suburbanite telephoned to know if the rumor was true. "It's on fire," was the laconic reply of the girl operator; "but don't worry. If it burns up, Mr. Letts will open for business somewhere else tomorrow."

The first thing Arthur Letts did when the fire was out was to send a check to the Firemen's Relief Association in token of his appreciation of the good work the men had done that day. In addressing his own fire-fighters, and presenting each with a gold piece, he remarked: "I want to show my appreciation of your efforts in fighting the fire. Many of you, I noticed, stood in water nearly to the knees, for several hours. One man I have particular words of praise for. Mr. Philp placed him at a station, telling him to keep the sewer clear of all debris, so the water could get away. Someone told him to go to another station. This man, in his forceful Irish way, said he would be damned if he would move from there until the man who placed him there told him to leave. Boys, this is the kind of man an employer wants—they are scarce—a man who will do as he is told, and stay by it. Mr. Lord, step up here—I am glad to shake your hand, for you certainly are O. K. Thank God! Ireland sends men like you over here—we need you." He then ordered new suits of clothes to be furnished to those whose clothing had been damaged during the fire.



ANXIOUS MOMENTS

The Broadway threatened with destruction by fire—November 16, 1908

Mrs. Arthur Letts

Arthur Letts, President National Retail Dry Goods Association

1914

With the fire out, Arthur Letts' troubles were by no means over. The receiving-room and chief stock-room were a total loss, and there was a heavy smoke damage in the main building. To make matters worse, the adjusters appointed by the insurance companies could not agree in their findings. After waiting ten days for a settlement, Arthur Letts, in desperation, placed his case before the district attorney. This had the desired effect, and a settlement was promptly made. In the meantime, competitors had not been asleep. Numerous were the "special sales" they ran in order to attract the customers that ordinarily would have gone to The Broadway. After a total lapse of two weeks, the store again opened for business. And such a crowd! At eight o'clock in the morning there were several thousand people waiting for admittance. The crowd kept increasing to such an extent that it was necessary to put chains at the doors to keep the people *out*. To prevent the waiting crowds from being crushed against the windows, boards were nailed across. When the store had been opened one hour, it was estimated that 30,000 people were in the building and on the streets outside waiting to gain admission. Such was the loyalty of The Broadway's patrons.

There are few cases on record where Arthur Letts "got left." One of the few occurred in England, in the summer of 1909. It was at Southampton, where he was to take the liner *Adriatic* for home. His family got aboard all right, but he in some way was occupied in saying farewell to friends when the steamer pulled out into the stream. He immediately jumped into a wherry and ordered the boatman to take him alongside the liner, which was turning in the stream. When his boatman hauled under the bow of the steamer the captain ordered him off.

"I'm a passenger and got left," shouted Arthur Letts, "and I must come aboard; my family are on your ship, and I have got all the tickets in my pocket."

"You cannot come aboard my ship now," roared back the captain. "Back to Southampton and take the next boat."

There were arguments and pleadings from Mr. Letts, and obdurate negations from the captain, and the steamer began to pull out, and the boatman pulled back.

As soon as he could find a tug—a sea-going tug—Arthur Letts chartered her, and again started after the *Adriatic.*

She was well on her way out to sea when the tug overhauled her, and again Mr. Letts demanded to be taken on board, and again the captain refused.

"See here, captain," shouted The Broadway merchant, "I am going to New York, and I'm going on your ship, and the sooner you let me on board the sooner we will both get there, for I'm going to follow you until you change your mind."

He talked a little more, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the captain begin to smile; and then a rope ladder was thrown over the steamer's side and Arthur Letts climbed on board, and got what he wanted: which was one of the reasons he was the man he was in business.

He has been described by some as "the most intensely alive man they had ever met." This is no more than would be expected of one whose favorite term was "zip." "Success," Mr. Letts once remarked, "is not so much a matter of more brains as more zip. Do you know that close to ninety percent of the people haven't any zip? And that's why they don't amount to anything especially. Education is all right. Personality is an essential. You've got to have a reasonable amount of brains. But zip is what gets you there."

Arthur Letts had now become an outstanding figure in mercantile circles. His genius for organization and financing won him recognition as a leader of merchants, not only in Los Angeles but throughout the country. At national meetings of retailers his opinions and expressions were taken as guides. It was early in 1910 that, in conjunction with W. E. Chamberlain, of A. Hamburger & Sons; and J. M. Schneider, of the J. W. Robinson Co., he issued a call for a preliminary meeting of merchants. The response was prompt and enthusiastic. At a subsequent meeting, held soon afterward, by-laws were adopted, and in September of the same year the Los Angeles Retail Dry-Goods Merchants' Association was incorporated, the membership including the owner or managing director of every retail dry-goods store in the city. Arthur Letts was elected its first President, which office he held for several years.

The objects of the association were to bring about a frequent and more friendly intercourse between members, to control and eliminate abuses in the trade, and to protect members from unjust and unlawful exactions. Uniformity in store hours and in the matter of closing on holidays was quickly reached, and what the members accomplished by co-operative work in connection with the Spring and Fall openings has already been told. The association also enabled the merchants to act as a unit on requests for contributions to public charities, convention funds, etc. It was due to Arthur Letts' initiative that in a city where competition is so exceptionally keen, merchants, though fighting each other hard for business, were able to find a common ground, and to act together on many important questions.

The following year, the merchants of San Francisco adopted this same plan; and in 1912 the California Retail Dry-Goods Association was organized, and honored Arthur

Letts by electing him Vice-President, and advancing him to the Presidency at the next annual meeting.

On February 12th, 1914, in convention at New York, the National Retail Dry-Goods Association elected Arthur Letts President, succeeding Donald Dey of Syracuse. Thus did the dry-goods merchants of America—from Maine to California and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf, representing hundreds of millions of invested capital—honor this man by conferring upon him the greatest gift within their power.

Arthur Letts devoted a great deal of his time to the interests of the various Dry-Goods Associations. His suggestion that the local association entertain the merchants of San Francisco was only one of the many efforts he made to bring about more friendly relations between the merchants of the two cities, and the San Francisco press hailed the event as a striking example of cordiality when their most prominent merchants did thus collectively drop their responsibilities and travel 1000 miles merely to express their sentiments of good-will to the merchants of the southern city.

The spirit of co-operation between merchants was given another boost when the merchants of the State assembled in Los Angeles at a convention presided over by Arthur Letts. Representing all cities of prominence in the State, these men returned to their homes, extravagant in their words of appreciation of what they had learned during the convention.

On behalf of the National Retail Dry-Goods Association, during his presidency Arthur Letts travelled more than ten thousand miles, visiting San Antonio, New Orleans, Atlanta, Nashville, Jacksonville, Savannah, Charleston, Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Kansas City, and many smaller towns. He attended banquets and luncheons and made talks in every city he visited. His "swing around the southern circle" did much to foster the spirit of co-operation among the merchants of the community.

Arthur Letts was always active in fighting offensive legislation and endeavoring to correct trade abuses. He used much of his influence to prevent unnecessary tariff increases, going so far in one instance as to urge his customers to sign petitions of remonstrance in protest against an unusually prohibitive and uncalled-for tariff on gloves and hosiery that had been proposed in the Senate. When these petitions reached Washington, they did much to influence more favorable legislation.

When the so-called Stevens bill was brought up in Congress, having for its object the compelling of merchants to maintain the price on manufactured articles named by the manufacturers, trusts, and combines, Arthur Letts lost no time in pointing out its viciousness and urging the merchants and the public to object to its enactment. "I am opposed to the Stevens bill," he said in an interview, "because it interferes with competition and makes of the retail dealer a sort of feudal vassal of the manufacturer. My business is mine; I established it; I am certainly the best judge of the selling price I may fix, with justice to myself, on the commodities I handle. If I do not allow myself an adequate profit I will go to the wall; but I do allow myself an adequate profit, although the margin that satisfies me may not please the man in Kalamazoo or Keokuk, whose product passes through my hands to the ultimate consumer. The proposition that somebody else fix a minimum or maximum value on my stock, or any part of it, is an invasion of personal rights, which I resent. It is a suggestion that the individual be permitted to do what the State and Federal Government has no right to do and has never attempted. Constituted authority may say how many pounds constitute a 'long' ton of coal, or how many ounces there may be in a loaf of bread, or how much liquid in a container; but after the coal or the bread or liquid passes to the ownership of John Smith it is his, and no other authority under the sun may say to Smith that he shall part with his goods at a fixed maximum price. That is an invasion of property rights."

Many were the trade abuses, such as the marking of incorrect lengths, sizes, etc., on goods of various kinds, that he endeavored to correct. Among these were ribbons in bolts that did not contain the number of yards claimed, blankets and sheets which were not of the length marked on them, bed quilts of domestic and also of foreign origin, certain kinds of linens, and a variety of notions and small wares. The remarkable thing was that, in not a few cases, goods that ran short in lengths or sizes were shipped to retailers by houses that otherwise were progressive in their methods and dealings. The only explanation that could be wrung from the seller was that he "didn't MAKE the goods; he only had to sell them, and the sizes on the bill were those which the goods were supposed to measure." Some methods were little, if at all, removed from "selling goods under false pretences." It was urged that these were merely trade customs, and not attempts to deceive. They did deceive the retailer in many cases, however, and in still more instances they deceived the store's customers. None realized more fully than Arthur Letts how those antiquated and wholly inexcusable methods were bad for the retailer. Obviously, those merchants who desired to do a clean business, and who advertised that their goods were exactly as claimed, felt themselves greatly handicapped when they were compelled to hand out articles which in point of measurement or size pretended to be what they were not. Naturally, customers who detected such discrepancies did not concern themselves with the manufacturers' shortcomings, but put all the blame on the store that sold them the unsatisfactory wares.

The outcome was that the sales force of The Broadway Department Store were instructed to sell goods only for what they really were, even if incorrectly marked; and Arthur Letts notified those from whom he bought goods that all items were to be marked and billed in strict accordance with the facts, otherwise they would be returned.

In civic matters, this merchant was equally active. He was always found in the forefront of any movement wherein the welfare of Los Angeles was concerned. Back in those early days of La Fiesta, he would offer numerous silver cups for the finest floral displays on buildings, his idea being that as Los Angeles was considered a synonym for flowers and beauty, merchants and property owners should be encouraged to decorate their premises with natural flowers in preference to the conventional bunting. One cup was allotted to each street. By this means he tried to encourage the smaller merchant. For a few dollars invested in chicken wire and plain vases and receptacles, and the flowers which employees and friends would gladly contribute, the man whose store occupied a thirty foot front could literally cover his building with flowers and make a display which the enormous expense of decking a larger building would render prohibitive.

When the city authorities undertook the improvement of the harbor and entered upon a campaign for the sale of harbor improvement bonds, Arthur Letts injected a feature of interest into the situation by subscribing for a large block on his own account and opening up a booth in his store, where the bonds were sold over the counter just as other merchandise.

This was something new at the time and caused much comment, for the World War was as yet undreamed of, and the public's knowledge of bond investments exceedingly limited.

Whenever a President or Vice-President of the United States visited Los Angeles, Arthur Letts would be found on the Entertainment Committee. He was always in readiness to do his part, no matter at what sacrifice of his time. On occasions when the city was confronted with any important situation that called for intelligent co-operation, he was found always amongst "those present," pledged to do what they thought would be best for the community. In the early part of 1911, Governor Hiram Johnson appointed him a Trustee of the State Normal School, an appointment he held for a number of years. At the time of his death he was serving on the Crime Commission, a little group of prominent men who had been appointed to co-ordinate all agencies of law and order in a genuine attack on the criminal element that was threatening the fair name of the city, to say nothing of the lives and property of the citizens.

Arthur Letts was a tall, lean greyhound of a man, lithe and quick, long-legged, long-armed, erect, alive. His eyes grey-blue, deeply set, his nose prominent and aquiline, his mouth large and down-curving in repose, but drawn to a straight line when he talked. He used his hands more or less, bringing to your attention the fact that they had broad palms and long, slender, sensitive fingers—the hands of a dreamer who was practical enough to make dreams come true. His color was exceptionally healthy and ruddy, his skin clear, and his well-proportioned head covered with white hair that made him distinguished. In Washington or London he would have been taken for a diplomat—an ambassador-extraordinary at least. His whole appearance was that of the man sure of himself, alert to see and seize opportunities, quick to make decisions and adamant in holding to them. There was no shilly-shallying with Arthur Letts, and there was no buck-passing either.

It is true that he expected much. Perhaps he was hard in the sense that he demanded from his lieutenants certain qualities which he himself possessed. Sometimes he was rough, and men took from him what they would never take from anyone else. They felt, in some strange way, that he was too big for them to fight successfully. He had the curious faculty of seldom praising his men, and yet keeping their enthusiasm stirred to the highest pitch for himself and the business.

Upon one occasion a fire had been started in the Store from a carelessly thrown cigarette. Realizing the danger from this source, he made a rule that there would be no smoking in the Store. Several weeks later, he was working late in his office, and, being now an inveterate smoker, his cigar was going full blast. Presently there came a knock on the door of his office. "Come," called Mr. Letts. The door opened, revealing the night watchman, who was making his rounds. There was an expression of disapproval on his face as he addressed the "boss." "No smoking allowed in this building after hours, it's against the rules." "Yes, yes, I know," replied the chief, somewhat testily, for he was very tired, "but I am Arthur Letts, the owner of this business." "Yes, sir, I know," answered the subordinate; "but I am the night watchman, and my orders from the superintendent are to permit no smoking in this building after the store is closed. I must respectfully ask you to put out that cigar, sir!" Arthur Letts stared at the man for a moment, then with a chuckle of appreciation for the thoroughness with which he was carrying out his orders, extinguished the offending cigar, and the night watchman went on his way. Nothing further was said about the incident, but when the night watchman was handed his pay envelope at the end of the week, it contained an increase in salary.

Arthur Letts insisted on the management of a department being so complete that it could operate successfully even when the manager was away. He knew that the management was bad when a department ceased to function properly during the manager's absence and, to him, naturally a department must be of greater importance than the manager.

If a manager adopted the attitude that the business could not get along without him, or became puffed up with the pride bred of success and allowed his egotism to annoy his fellow-managers, nothing was more certain than that his star was already declining in the firmament and was liable to set at any moment. No man was too important to be discharged if the master mind so determined.

It was a rule of Arthur Letts that he would not go to law unless it was absolutely unavoidable. He hated the idea of the publicity attached to the process, and preferred to pay voluntarily, if that were necessary, rather than incur the lawsuit and the possible damages resulting therefrom. Though he was a dictator and sometimes got into trouble in matters where he was determined to have his own way, he knew that the publicity incidental to fighting in court would not be a good thing for his business. He did not propose to risk losing in half-an-hour in the witness box a reputation that had taken a lifetime to acquire.

Typical of some of the strange suits that were filed against him during his career was one in which he was sued for $20,000.00 damages by a woman who had attempted to defraud one of the Store's delivery men. The driver had called at the woman's home with a C. O. D. package. The woman held in her hand a $10.00 bill and the driver counted out the necessary change and handed it to her. She took the change; but, instead of handing the man the $10.00 bill, she retreated inside the house and attempted to slam the door shut. The man was quick enough, however, to block the door with his foot and, reaching inside seized the woman and demanded his money. She refused to hand it over, so without more ado he grabbed her up and carried her out to his wagon, locked her in the wired enclosure, then drove to the nearest drug store and telephoned the superintendent of the delivery department for instructions.

Arthur Letts knew that nothing would bring a football team up to its full defensive strength like defending its own goal with the opposing team on the five-yard line threatening to score, consequently he realized that nothing would test the ability and the capacity of his men for work like feeling the weight of heavy responsibility resting squarely on their shoulders, and he saw to it they got it. He invariably had with him a pad or some memorandum paper on which he could jot down thoughts as they came to him. His imagination was constantly at work on new methods of conducting business. His sense of good business was alive, alert, all over. He never was content to stop with what he had achieved. His eye and thought were always ahead. He had tomorrow for his goal rather than yesterday. And the slogan of tomorrow was, "beat yesterday;" and it was the spirit of "beat yesterday" that he instilled into his employees.

Never could he remove from his nature the intense strain of activity. He was equal to every emergency. Nevertheless, the growth of the business was so extraordinary, and so many new problems were forced upon him for solution, that at times it took the last ounce of physical and mental energy which he possessed. Oftentimes at night he went home and threw himself on the lounge utterly exhausted—too tired even to eat.

If there was one branch of his business that Arthur Letts watched particularly closely it was, perhaps, the advertising. Many people have peculiar notions about advertising—people who read it, and people who write it. Because its underlying motive is to sell something, or to propagate some idea, the most convincing advertising is apt to be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt.

Arthur Letts was a great advertiser, and he was always scheming to get ahead. In the early days he not only wrote his own advertisements, but personally carried the copy to the newspaper offices. In those days the advertisements could not be written up in advance, because Arthur Letts did not know just what he would have to sell until the merchandise was in the store, and it was an unwritten law that merchandise must be in stock before advertised. He had strong convictions about advertising. He believed in using fairly large, plain type, clear illustrations, straightforward statements, and homely speech.

"We esteem goodwill more than profit," said Arthur Letts in one of his early advertisements; and with the vision of a prophet and the wisdom of a seer he set about building up an invisible structure that is now of tremendous value. For proper advertising creates goodwill, not in unrelated units, but in the mass. It establishes the confidence of merchant and consumer alike. If the article is a "second" it must be so presented. Be fair to the merchandise, was the one command—understate, but never exaggerate; don't impose on poor, dumb merchandise responsibilities that it cannot bear.

If even an accurate statement of fact is so surprising that it is likely to be disbelieved by the reader, enough must be explained of the inside news of the special offer to make it carry confidence.

A reason must always be given for a special price or extra quality.

All merchandise must be personally inspected, before any writing is done. No imaginative descriptions must be linked with definite prices.

All statements regarding size, quality, color, price, etc., must be vouched for as correct by the department in which the garment or article is sold.

No misleading or ambiguous names must be applied to materials, furs, metals, etc. The exact weave, pelt or substance must be clearly indicated.

And to make sure that every printed statement was correct, special "checkers" were instructed to go over every advertised item, to insure against any inadvertent misrepresentation. The advertising thus became the voice of the Store. And the Store stands back of every word that voice utters. The advertising word is as good as the Store's bond.

Advertisements of The Broadway Department Store have been reproduced in newspapers and journals of many lands, and have won numerous national prizes. They have been publicly referred to as doing credit to the city of Los Angeles, and to the great Commonwealth of California.

Brick and stone and mortar do not measure the size of a business: it is the broadening influence of its merchandising principles. Nothing can retard the growth of a business such as Arthur Letts founded. At the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the National Retail Dry-Goods Association, held in New York in 1925, an advertising code was adopted that was substantially the same as that which has been The Broadway Department Store's policy for a great many years; in fact, The Broadway has gone even further than the Association suggests, since the Store, some time ago, discontinued using comparative prices in order to insure overcoming what might perhaps be classified as "doubtful advertising."

Speaking as an honor guest before the Advertising Club of Los Angeles one day, Arthur Letts endeavored to point out that not only must advertising be honest and truthful, but in addition to all the other qualities essential, it must be properly placed in order to be successful. "The standard of the newspaper," he said, "and the confidence its readers place in the reliability of its columns, is the largest factor in determining the value of your advertising. . . Mere circulation does not determine the efficiency of your ad. Get circulation if you can, but be sure that the circulation you get has the true intrinsic value."

When called upon on one occasion to introduce Sir Thomas Lipton before a notable gathering at a banquet in Los Angeles, Mr. Letts prefaced his remarks by stating that, a few years previously, he was staying at the Savoy Hotel in London. When he retired for the night, he could not help noticing a tall chimney across from his window. As he lay in bed, the word "Lipton" in electric lights kept illuminating that chimney from top to bottom. L-I-P-T-O-N, then it would go out; and again L-I-P-T-O-N, until it seemed that he could never get to sleep without seeing the name Lipton. Turning to Sir Thomas, he smilingly added that he never was so sick of a name in his life, as he was of the name Lipton, and now here he was called upon to introduce Sir Thomas! Sir Thomas Lipton, in arising, said to Mr. Letts: "You must admit, Mr. Letts, that was good advertising." "Yes," replied Arthur Letts, "that was the point I was trying to make."

Many and novel were the unusual attractions which Arthur Letts introduced, these giving his store an atmosphere peculiarly its own. "There's always something doing at The Broadway," became a familiar exclamation in Los Angeles. The advent of the toy season was at one time ushered in by a series of doll-dressing contests. This was not always satisfactory on account of the disappointment caused to those who were not fortunate enough to win prizes. So, in time, this feature gave way to a Doll's Tea Party, which was destined to become an annual event of considerable renown. In the gaily decorated restaurant a reception is held for the children of The Broadway's patrons. Here they meet the new dolls of the season, eat ice cream and cake, and drink chocolate out of dainty little cups which they are permitted to take home with them in carefully provided bags as souvenirs of the occasion. It is a truly inspiring sight to watch these little children gazing in raptures at the tiers of dolls of all colors, all sizes, and all expressions that have come from France and Germany and Japan to find little American mothers at Christmas time. Between two and three thousand children are served at these parties. Many of the little guests of the first of these Doll's Tea Parties are now married women with "real" children in place of dolls, and they in turn are bringing these children to the parties which gave them so much enjoyment when they were tots.

The arrival of Santa Claus at The Broadway has ever been a feature of great interest to the children, from the time he entered the city limits, tossing thousands of packages of candy to the kiddies congregated on the street corners awaiting his passing, to the moment when he bounced with his toy-pack down the broad chimney of his bungalow in the Store's toy department and stood smiling and bowing before the assembled crowds of children, saying, "How Do You Do?" to all. And Santa did not forget to visit the youthful inmates of the Children's Hospital and help them to momentarily forget their aches and pains and loneliness.

On Saturdays was instituted a story-telling hour for children, so that parents who wished to shop could do so, leaving the tots with the story-teller.

> *"Tell me a story of wolves and bears;*
> *Tell me a fairy tale.*
> *Mother has gone up the street to buy*
> *Goods at a bargain sale.*
> *I'm left alone with Sis and Bob,*
> *Nothing to do but play.*
> *Tell me a story of fairies, please;*
> *Help pass the time away."*

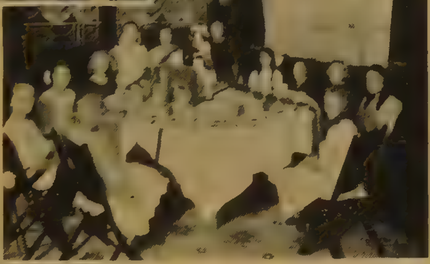
Is there a boy or girl who doesn't love stories? There can't be many, judging from the crowds of children that have thronged The Broadway during the story-telling hours on Saturday.

Mention should be made of the children's plays, given during the holiday season. The idea grew from the small beginnings of the story-telling hour. Gradually those in the Store interested found numbers of children with unusual histrionic ability. The fact was not new to them, but finding them in such numbers at their door was something of an awakening. So, why not a constructive feature, something more than the mere entertainment of children while their mothers shopped?

The idea was put into concrete form, and a little "Chil-

THE APPROACH OF CHRISTMAS AT THE BROADWAY

The Doll's Tea Party has become an annual event of considerable renown



The arrival of Santa Claus at The Broadway has ever been a feature of great interest

A Community Theater for the children

Below—"Our Gang" getting new shoes at The Broadway

INNOVATIONS
TO
INTEREST
THE
CHILDREN

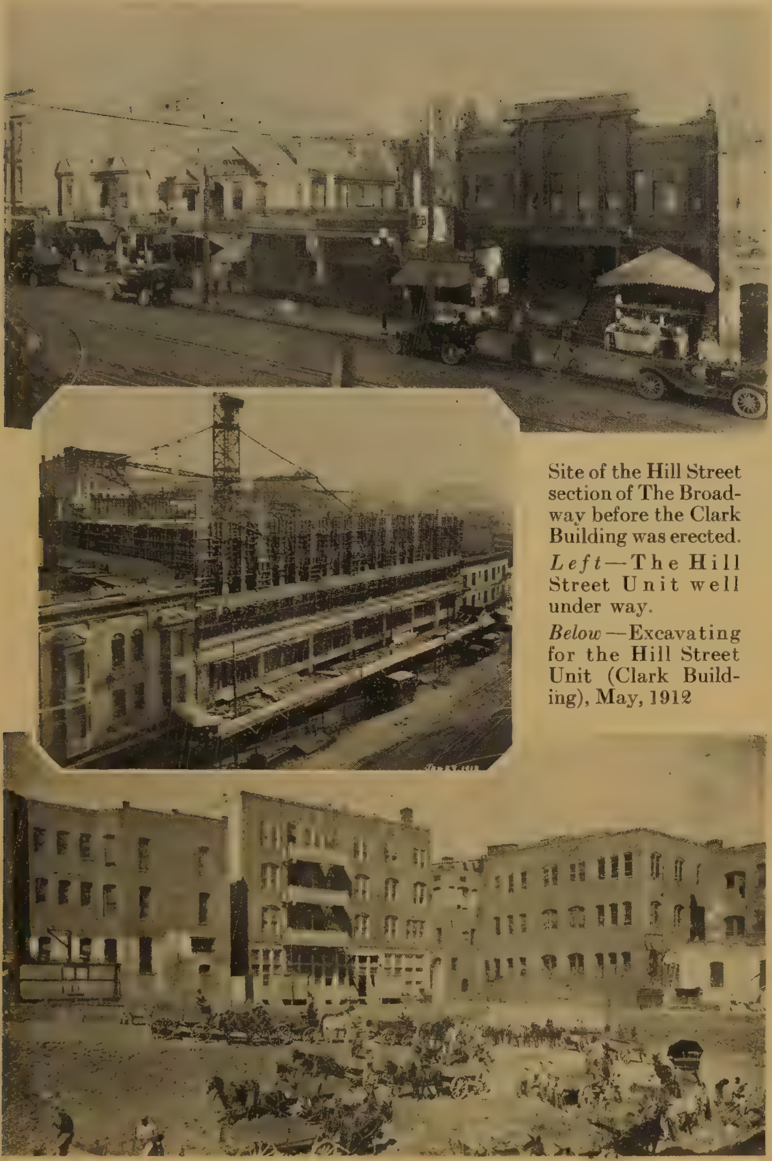
dren's Community Theatre" instituted, where the would-be stars were trained in the art of acting, and many pleasing little plays presented.

Most of the juvenile "movie stars" have been engaged at one time or other to entertain the children of the Store's patrons, and it is rare for a season to pass without a series of miniature circus performances to amuse the kiddies.

So much for the children. For the grown-ups, new attractions have been constantly provided: baby shows, pure food shows, magnificent flower shows, receptions to famous beauties, entertainments by prominent theatrical stars, fashion revues in living pictures—to say nothing of innumerable exhibits of current interest. Shortly after Commander Peary returned from the North Pole, the identical American flag which accompanied him on his journey, and from which patches were cut and left as evidences of his arrival at points along the way—including a diagonal strip from corner to corner which was left at the Pole itself—was placed on exhibition in The Broadway Department Store. This flag was only exhibited at two places on the Pacific Coast—in Arthur Letts' store, and in San Francisco. Back in 1905, when the Post Office in Los Angeles was moved from a central to an outlying location, Arthur Letts appreciated the fact that the down-town public would be seriously inconvenienced, so he arranged to have a branch post office established in his store. It rapidly became the most important branch in the city, and it wasn't long until from one-eighth to one-sixth of all the business transacted by the post office department in Los Angeles was done in this office.

Many of these innovations, as well as the idea of novel exhibits and projects, have now become commonplace in store-keeping. But Arthur Letts was among the pioneers in adding such interesting features to the drab life of the shopkeeping world and by so doing making the working day of the toilers brighter and more pleasureful. Perhaps he looked back to long days of toil in those first positions of his early youth, when life outside of the shops in which he was employed was full of movement and interest, but inside, where he worked, was a monotonous grind. Perhaps he turned to that great book of human nature which he seemed to read with such clearness and ease, and saw the wisdom of making stores interesting and shopping delightful. Whatever his motive, the result was good business, shrewd advertising, and of widespread benefit. Some people said these features were "nothing but pure advertising." Advertising they were, undoubtedly. They brought crowds. But they were more than advertising. They were informative, beneficial, enjoyable.

The business that is satisfied with itself—with its product and its sales, and which looks upon itself as having accomplished its purpose—is dead. The actual burial may be postponed; but it is dead because it is not going forward. To the mind of Arthur Letts, nothing could ever be good enough. He was always dissatisfied. He could always see where something might be better; and therefore his business was never at rest; and he never wished it to be. For long years he visualized the type of building in which he would like to do business, and in his dreams he was constantly picturing today's Broadway rising through the mists, its great building filled with a small city full of happy workers, the markets of the world pouring their choicest products into its warehouses—and chiefly, developing its warm, red-blooded human heart, ideal upon ideal, holding fast to a high purpose and an uncompromising integrity! Yes, he was a dreamer, that man! And, moreover, he was determined to make his dreams come true.

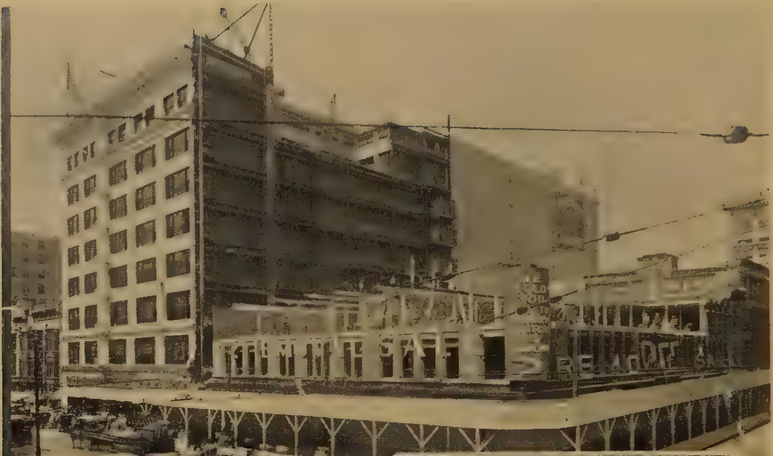


Site of the Hill Street section of The Broadway before the Clark Building was erected.

Left—The Hill Street Unit well under way.

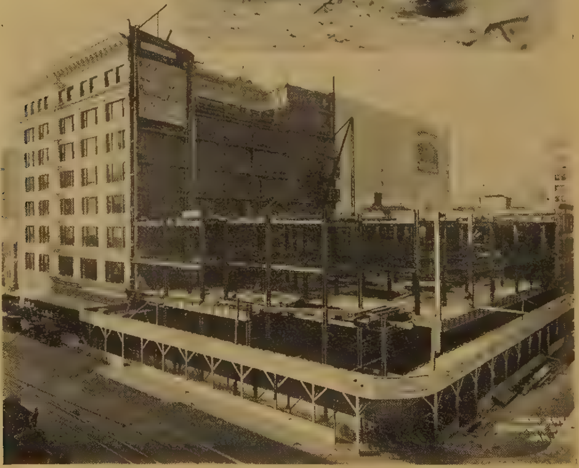
Below—Excavating for the Hill Street Unit (Clark Building), May, 1912

ERECTING THE NEW BUILDING

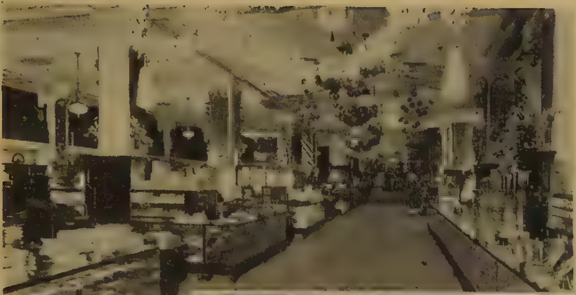


The last unit of the old Broadway was torn down in three days

Right—Arthur Letts, with a small diamond-studded golden shovel breaking ground for the final unit



Making rapid progress on the final unit



Spacious aisles

Jewelry and Leather Goods

Whole floors devoted entirely to ladies' wearing apparel

Perfumes and Druggists' Sundries

WHEN
DREAMS
COME
TRUE

Cretonnes

In the Silk
Section

A Section for
Candlesticks

In the Art
Rooms

It was a happy day, in the Summer of 1912, when he publicly announced the consummation of the plans for his new building. He did not own the land upon which The Broadway stood, neither could he purchase it; so he entered into a long-time lease and decided to go ahead and erect a modern building at his own expense. The problem was—how, without the stoppage of the business or the loss of much of it, could he erect on the same site the type of building which he knew was necessary? After much study and consultation with architects and engineers, the plan finally evolved was to build in sections. Before the Clark building, fronting on Hill Street, was ready for occupancy, excavations were begun under that portion of the old building which was least suitable for merchandising. Then the foundations for the new columns were put in place, so that much of the substructure for the new building was ready for the erection of the steel before the old building was torn down.

The first move was made into the completed Clark section on the night of November 1st, 1913. To remove the huge stock of merchandise between closing time in the evening and opening time in the morning, without the interruption of business for a single hour in any department, was no mean feat. Palmer Cox's brownies, who reared a castle complete in one night, from donjon keep to turret, "had little on" Arthur Letts and his lieutenants. Palmer Cox called magic to his aid and added a world of fancy in his creation, whereas Arthur Letts had but willing hands and trained workers on his side, and fleeting time and an immense stock of merchandise to contend with.

The south half of the old building was then torn down. Nine months later, the completed south half of the new building, nine stories high together with the basement and sub-basement, stood in its place.

Again the transition from the old to the new took place in a night. That a thousand persons helped to do the moving did not lessen the marvel of it.

The remaining half of the old building was torn down in three days. After the debris had been cleared away, the ceremony of breaking ground for the final unit took place. With band playing, and surrounded by a thousand employees, Arthur Letts was presented with a tiny gold shovel studded with diamonds, with which dainty and valuable implement he turned the first earth, signifying the beginning of this last portion of the building to house his expanding business. Then one of the girls symbolized the employees' co-operation in erecting the great building by starting the steam shovel on its huge work of gouging out the corner to make way for the deep sub-basement and foundation work.

Thus the new Store was built. The thunderous energy of steam riveters, the noise of saw and hammer, synchronized with the tread of thousands of hurrying customers, with the sale of silks and laces, of toys and home furnishings. It was a strange contrast. It was a marvel of human ingenuity, of tireless patience and cheerful endurance of discomfort and inconvenience on the part of workpeople, because of loyalty to honorable business principles and ideals.

On Monday morning, June 28th, 1915, the completed structure was thrown open to the public. If ever there had been a doubt in anyone's mind that this Store was a store "for the people, of the people, by the people," that doubt was soon set at rest. Over sixty thousand persons thronged the building that day.

It was really interesting to watch the way in which people took possession of the place. They penetrated to the most remote parts of the big structure, and without exception made themselves at home. It was, in fact, as though

Comfortable Rest Rooms

Right—There are 17 passenger elevators

Left—Barber Shop. *Below*—The Children's Nursery

FOR
PUBLIC
CONVENIENCE

General Office

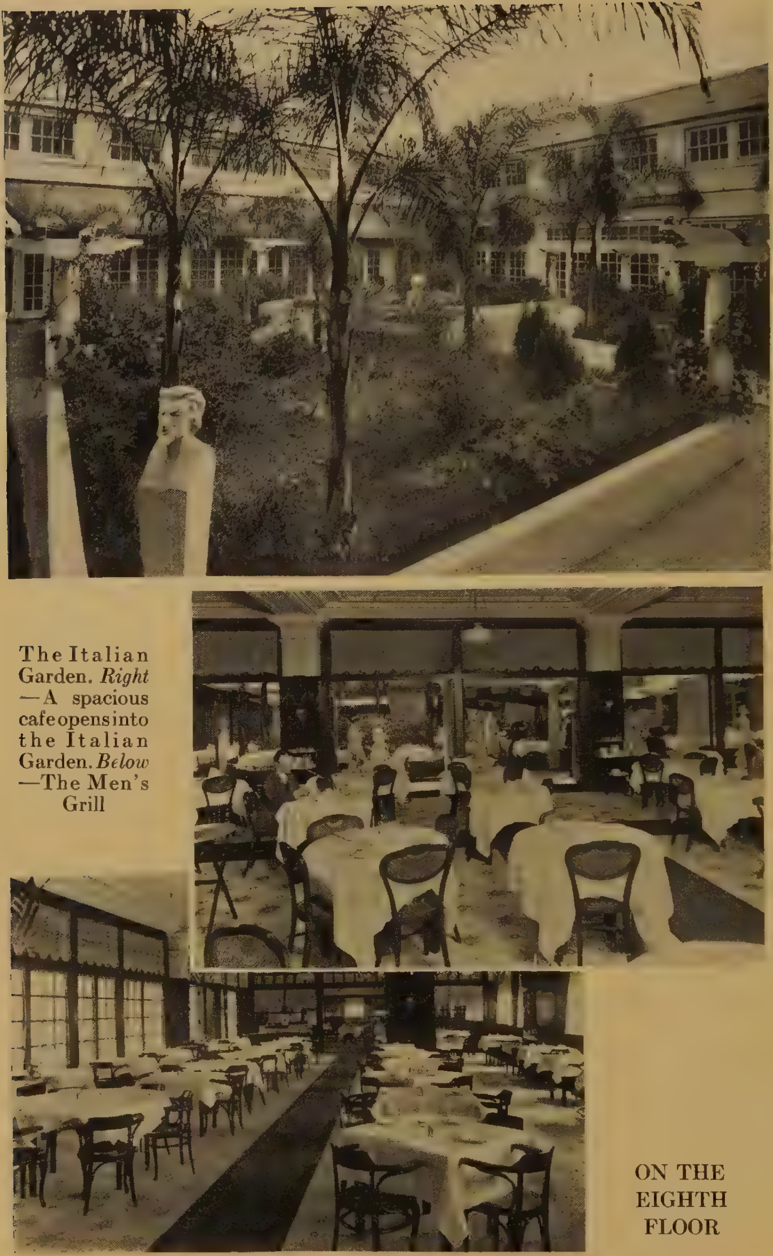
Traffic Office

Auditing Office

IN THE
OFFICES

The Broadway Department Store

CUSTOMERS WAITING FOR THE DOORS TO OPEN



The Italian Garden. *Right*—A spacious cafe opens into the Italian Garden. *Below*—The Men's Grill

ON THE EIGHTH FLOOR

they had designed and built the place themselves. The spacious balconies were enjoyed to the fullest; the dressing-rooms, equipped with the latest of all conveniences, were forthwith made useful; and, in fact, all who made the place their objective point seemed to feel themselves a part of a large family, privileged to live in the new home as amicably and as confidently as they had in the old store.

It was an immense place, nine stories high, with entrances on three streets, admitting at the opening of the doors in the morning upwards of three thousand customers, elevators carrying these hither and thither to different points on the far-flung floors. A vast store-house, this, of things pertaining to the clothing, housing and feeding of the community, to its occupations, diversions and various trends of taste: Long stretches of space assigned to the wants of the little tots, everything requisite for the nursery, the schoolroom, and the indoor or outdoor place of play; whole departments featuring respectively youths' and misses' garments; others devoted solely to the sundry details of women's attire—gowns, cloaks, suits, blouses and skirts; others given over in wide extent each to handkerchiefs, perfumes, veils, neckwear, laces and embroideries, millinery, footwear, hosiery, underclothing, gloves, ribbons, buttons, "notions," and fabrics of every usual kind—cloth, silk, velvet, crepe and diaphanous tissues; departments devoted to the needs of men—clothing, headwear, and "furnishings"; still others set apart for the showing and selling of jewelry, umbrellas, pocket-books, shopping bags and traveling paraphernalia. Broader areas were occupied by such things as make for the comfort, charm and convenience of the modern dwelling—floor-coverings, wall-coverings, draperies, linens, china, glass and lamps; other sections had been committed to the full equipment of the housewife—to the supplying of cooking utensils, laundry apparatus, cleaning facilities, etc.

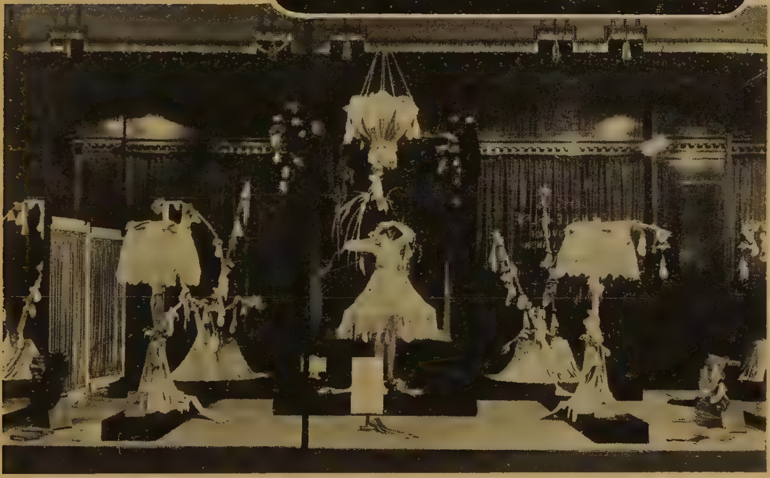
There was a section for drugs, toilet preparations, and cameras; space had been claimed for the sportsman—for his many and diverse demands, from fishing tackle to golf balls and automobile sundries. And still other sections were maintained for the satisfaction of the intellectual and artistic, with books, musical instruments and pictures. Well-furnished rest rooms and writing rooms were available; a spacious auditorium, a nursery, a hospital; a "silence room," where women under stress of weariness or nerve strain could retire for complete rest and absolute silence; a place to check your parcels and wraps; a Cafe and a Grill Room for breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea. A vast emporium, fulfilling the desire of its creator!—drawing strength and sustenance from its buying organizations in the great markets at home and abroad, and projecting its activities into other parts of the State through its Mail Order Department.

When Arthur Letts was asked what, to him, was of most concern in the new home, he said without hesitation, and so earnestly that no one could for a moment doubt that the speech came from his soul:

"I am most pleased that at last my people, those who have worked so faithfully, can have plenty of heat, plenty of light, every comfort in which to dwell during the hours of their down-town life."

It was upon this phase of the new Store that his mind seemed to dwell. There was no boasting as to the greatness of the achievement in having built up in the few years of his endeavor a business of which any merchant prince, in this nation of merchant princes, might be proud; no estimating the gain in volume of business over that of others, or over that of the humble beginnings of the business; only a hearty thankfulness that the new Store would offer to

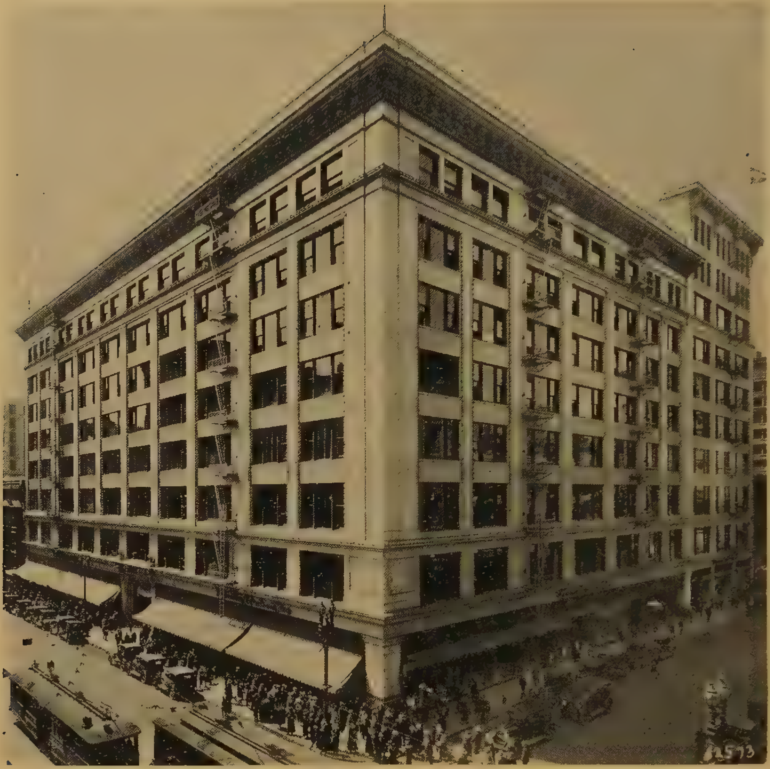
WINDOWS THAT
MIRROR THE
STORE'S
ACTIVITIES



INVITING WINDOW DISPLAYS

WELCOME
B.P.O.E.

NIGHT ILLUMINATIONS ON THE NEW BUILDING



THE BROADWAY DEPARTMENT STORE AS IT STANDS TODAY the workers within its walls every facility for health, for equilibrium, for better body and brain building, which could go on without interruption during the hours of their working day.

There has since been erected a sixty-foot addition on Fourth Street, ten stories in height, so that the building as it now stands possesses a floor area of almost fourteen acres. There are seventeen passenger elevators and seven freight elevators, two of which are capable of lifting fifteen-ton loads. There are eight escalators running from the basement to the fourth floor—four ascending and four descending—with a carrying capacity of four thousand persons per hour.

Down in the sub-basements, two stories and three stories below the ground, are the power genii of the building. Here is a huge ventilating fan, which draws in one hundred and sixty thousand cubic feet of air per minute. This air is drawn through a water curtain at the roof. The curtain consists of a myriad of water-sprays, and it is impossible for any air to enter this ventilator without coming in contact with these sprays and being thoroughly washed or clarified, all impurities being dashed out against the bafflers of the curtain.

After being washed, the air is drawn down through a concrete shaft, running to the sub-basement. There it passes through the large fan into a vento, in which are three thousand and eight hundred feet of pipe coils. These coils may be used to cool the air in summer by filling them with cold water, and to warm the air in winter by filling them with steam. The temperature of the coils is governed by a thermostat, so that the air is always distributed at a uniform degree.

After passing through this enormous vento, and having been tempered as well as washed, the air is distributed through ducts leading to numerous radiators on the columns and ceiling of the basement and sub-basements.

The other part of the system consists of numerous ducts connected with registers in the floor of the basement, various lavatories, and the kitchen on the eighth floor.

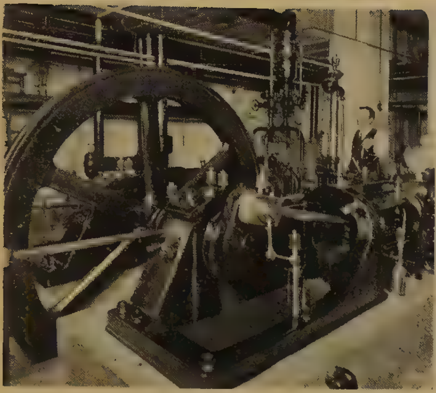
These ducts lead to another enormous fan, on the tenth floor, which throws all the foul air out through a tremendous exhaust cowl or hood, on the roof, at the rate of eighty thousand cubic feet per minute.

Through this wonderful system, people may breathe purer air in the basement or sub-basement, or even the engine room (forty feet below the street), than they would though they were standing on the roof, as they are actually breathing roof-air clarified.

All water used in the Store for drinking purposes, together with that used in the manicure and hair-dressing departments, as well as hot water for the lavatories, barber shop and that used in the boilers, passes through a large Page-Jones Filtering plant, which destroys all the injurious qualities, while the life-giving qualities are retained.

There is a twelve-ton refrigeration plant which pumps zero air through coils to the various refrigerators in the building, in addition to making large quantities of ice. All drinking-water, after leaving the filtering plant, passes through coils submerged in ice-cold water, and is pumped continually throughout the building, so that at each drinking fountain on each floor the water is uniformly cold.

In the engine room there are three high-pressure boilers generating a capacity of four hundred and fifty horsepower, together with a three-hundred-horsepower Corliss engine, which supplies most of the power other than electric and has a pumping capacity of two thousand five hundred gallons per minute.

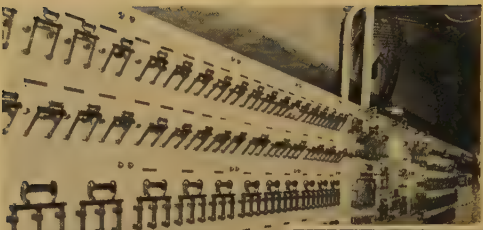


In the Engine Room

Right—Carpenter Shop

Below—Mail Order Packing Room

BEHIND
THE
SCENES



Electric switch-board in Engine Room

Yesterday's miracle, to-day's necessity Main telephone switch-board

In the pneumatic tube room

Sewing carpets

On the main electric switchboard are some three hundred switches controlling the more-than ten thousand lights inside and outside of the building, which consume 150,000 kilowatts of electricity per month.

At the foot of a chute, forty feet below the street level, is a compressing machine that takes care of the waste paper as it falls in a never-ending stream from the various floors. There it is shredded and baled—fifteen tons a month.

Special chutes and moving carrier belts bring the thousands of packages from the departments down to the subbasement, from where they are dispatched immediately to the warehouse for routing and prompt delivery in a fleet of approximately fifty trucks. Packages that can be sent by parcel post are delivered free to any address in the world.

Through pneumatic tubes, cash and certain documents are sent with lightning-like speed throughout the building. That service to customers may be speeded as much as possible, the pneumatic cash system has been supplemented by an installation of upwards of three hundred cash registers.

Eight telephone operators are constantly on duty at the main telephone switchboard. Connected to this switchboard are sixty trunk lines, over which an average of some ten thousand calls per day are handled.

Every possible safeguard against fire has been taken. In addition to hose lines and chemical extinguishers, nearly seven thousand automatic sprinkler heads, thermostatically controlled, are waiting night and day to send forth a deluge of water should the temperature in any part of the building ever rise beyond a certain fixed point.

The slightest movement of water through any one of these sprinkler heads sets the alarm gongs ringing. By merely pressing a button, the city fire department is called out; and, through an elaborate system of push buttons, the Store's private fire department of one hundred and fifty men can be called instantly to any location.

Such is the building that for long years Arthur Letts had dreamed of possessing. He had taken advantage of time and opportunity, and now his dream had come true.

Many other investments besides The Broadway now claimed his attention, and our country's entry into the World War added still further to his cares.

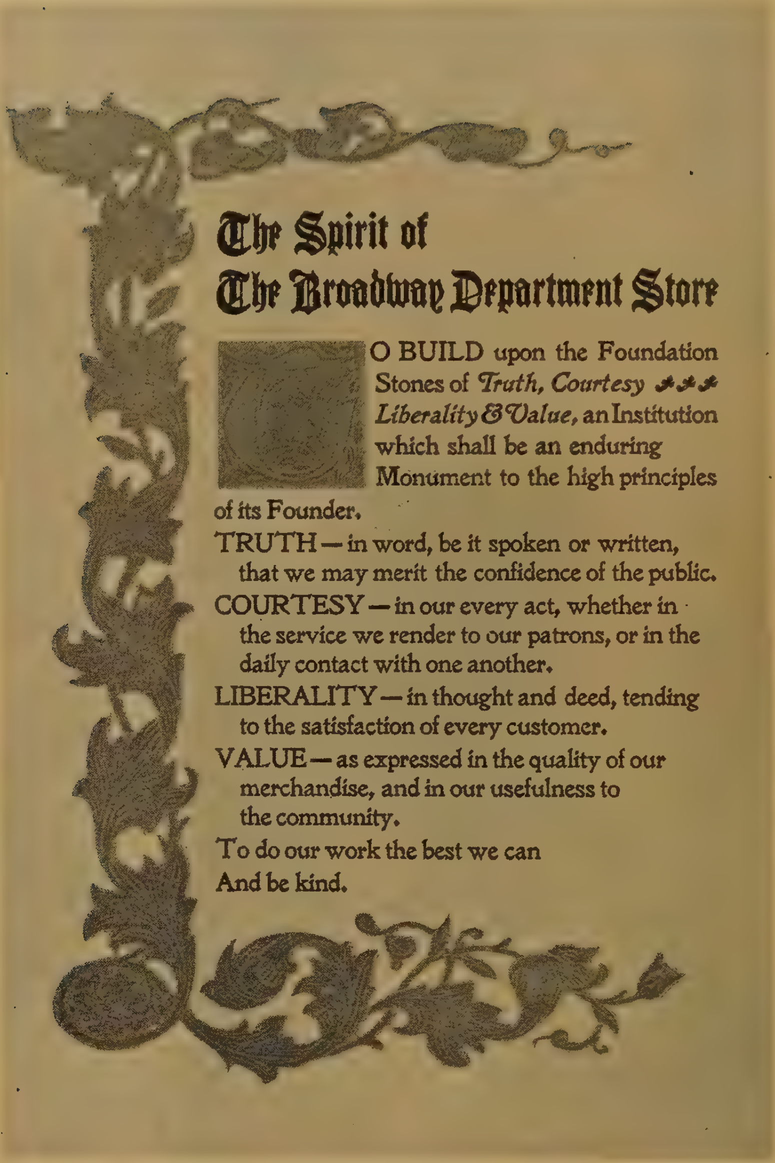
He was forced now to depend upon his managers to a greater extent than ever, and the principle that when a man had been placed in charge of any work he must accept full responsibility therefor became firmly established. He gave his managers full authority and then left them absolutely alone; in fact, he so absented himself, at times, that they could not even consult him in emergency.

The big business man of today differs greatly from his prototype of a hundred years ago. No man today can do, or attempt to do, all things. No matter how great his ability he is forced to realize his limitations. So Arthur Letts had taken care to put the pyramid of business right side up, with himself at the apex, and others carrying the load he formerly carried alone. Ever a man of vision, with his keen gaze on far horizons, he realized the tendency for a business to perish when the able hand of the individual proprietor had gone. So he took steps to cement together an organization which would survive long after the originator had passed away. He decided to incorporate. This occurred on May 12th, 1919.

Arthur Letts had been wise enough to keep his principal men about him. He had pruned only when there was no other way. Mostly he had polished and helped to develop their characters, ever pointing the lessons of experience in kindly fashion, fitting them into their proper niches, with

Malcolm McNaghten, *Vice-President in Charge of Finance*; Harry G. R. Philp, *Vice-President and General Manager*; Arthur Letts, Jr., *President*; Arthur Strasburger, *Vice-President in Charge of Merchandise*; William H. B. Kilner, *Secretary & Treasurer*

DIRECTORS OF THE BROADWAY DEPARTMENT STORE



The Spirit of
The Broadway Department Store

O BUILD upon the Foundation Stones of *Truth, Courtesy* ❧❧❧ *Liberality & Value,* an Institution which shall be an enduring Monument to the high principles of its Founder.

TRUTH — in word, be it spoken or written, that we may merit the confidence of the public.

COURTESY — in our every act, whether in the service we render to our patrons, or in the daily contact with one another.

LIBERALITY — in thought and deed, tending to the satisfaction of every customer.

VALUE — as expressed in the quality of our merchandise, and in our usefulness to the community.

To do our work the best we can
And be kind.

THE SPIRIT OF A BUSINESS THAT WAS ERECTED
ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

enhanced efficiency every passing year. Thus the men to direct the new corporation were already trained for their work.

When the old store first opened for business on that memorable morning in February, 1896, there sat at a little desk in the center of the store a young lad—one, Harry Philp—who took the cash from the clerks and made the necessary change. Step by step he had risen to become the Chief's right-hand man, and now he became first Vice-President and General Manager. William H. B. Kilner, who had joined the Store's forces in 1900, as an assistant bookkeeper, was made Secretary and Treasurer; and Arthur Strasburger, who had been with the organization since 1905—first in charge of the New York Office and, later, as Merchandise Manager of the Store—together with the Chief's son, Arthur Letts, Jr., were made directors. These same men are today directing the destinies of the business, except that when Arthur Letts passed away, in 1923, his son was elected to the Presidency, and his son-in-law, Malcolm McNaghten, who had become affiliated with the organization in 1920, was elected Vice-President in charge of Finance.*

Like the heads of an army constantly engaged, these men are always on the alert, receiving reports and issuing orders and instructions through their deputies. They must see that the innumerable parts of the machine are operating smoothly. They are forever countering strokes of the adversary, driving forward where openings become apparent, and extending the front where and when it is possible and desirable to do so. It is their hope that the business will never cease to have a heart and a conscience, that it will never lose that sense of personal intimacy with its customers—that "atmosphere" that helps to make them feel that California's sunshine is in the hearts of her people! Arthur Letts is dead, but his spirit lives in the present management. Because it is founded upon sound principles, The Broadway will stand indefinitely as a memorial to his doctrine of Truth, Courtesy, Liberality and Value.

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*Since this was written, a re-organization of The Broadway Department Store has been consummated. Mr. Letts' family, after serious consideration, decided to dispose of the business. The sale was effected to certain executives of the old organization, with the assistance of Dillon, Read & Co., bankers, of New York; and Mr. Malcolm McNaghten was elected President of the new organization, Broadway Department Store, Inc., with Mr. Harry Philp and Mr. Arthur Strasburger co-operating with him as Vice-Presidents, thus assuring a continuation of those sterling principles laid down by the founder of the business.

Mr. Arthur Letts, Jr., is now devoting his entire time to the Holmby Corporation and other affairs of his father's estate, while the writer, William H. B. Kilner, has retired to look after his personal interests.

In all ages the man who has fought against great odds in business and has succeeded in doing big things in an honest way, in spite of those odds, has always inspired the respect of mankind.

Arthur Letts not only found the keyhole to success, but he possessed the key that fitted it. In a message to his fellow-workers in the Store, he declared:

"It is not luck, for too often luck does not go hand in hand with hard work, and almost every successful life has a background of unceasing labor. . .

"It is not money that spells success—it is not prestige; for in the beginning there is often little, if any, money; and the prestige comes from development of the business to a successful degree.

"I would rather think of the possession of a keen imagination, power to visualize, power to see into the future, as the dominant factors in the upbuilding of a successful mercantile enterprise. . .

"Success, to one man, may be the desire to have the best bootblack establishment; to another, the highest political position in the city or nation; to another, fame as a writer;

to another, to own a mercantile establishment that will stand out as a monument of success. . . .

"Today the public expects deeds, rather than promises.

"My talisman would not be a luck charm, but rather pluck, vision, optimism, determination and plenty of hard work.

"There are as many opportunities in business today as there were 25 years ago. It remains for the man of vision and enterprise to have the proper determination to reach that particular goal of success which he desires to attain."

This merchant prince one day remarked that the happiest period of his life was that spent in attempting to achieve the object of his desires; that after his dreams were largely realized, life did not seem to hold the same pleasure.

CHAPTER VI

Other Irons in the Fire

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OTHER IRONS IN THE FIRE

IT WAS natural that a man who had forged ahead so astoundingly in business as did Arthur Letts should have other investments besides The Broadway Department Store. As the years passed, he became interested in many large enterprises in Southern California, although his name rarely appeared on the lists of directors. Being always a believer in thrift and in saving, the money he made, as his business grew, he invested carefully. He frequently said that he owed his start in life to his ability to save money and to practice close economy at all times.

Whenever a young man approached him for advice on any business affair, no matter how busy Arthur Letts was, he generally found time to give the anxious applicant a few kindly words of counsel and encouragement, and always said: "Save your money." He was fond of quoting Benjamin Franklin: "The use of money is all the advantage there is in having money. For £6 a year you may have the use of £100 provided you are a man of prudence and honesty." In short, the way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words—industry and frugality. That is, watch neither time nor money, but make the best use of both. He that gets all he can honestly, and saves all he gets (necessary expenses excepted), will certainly become rich, if that Being who governs the world, to Whom all should look for a blessing on honest endeavors, doth not in His wise providence otherwise determine.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that this young man was stingy. He was simply following a shrewd rule. On several occasions he made the remark that the first thousand dollars was the hardest to get; after that it came easier.

Many millionaires have made their great fortunes by fortunate speculations, but Arthur Letts could never be classed among speculators, unless his many profitable investments in real estate could be called speculations. That is not to say that he never speculated. He did.

One day in August, 1896, George W. McCormack struck rich gold pannings and staked "Discovery" claim on Bonanza Creek, Yukon Territory, Canada, thereby opening the Klondike district, which has produced an estimated billion dollars worth of yellow metal. And ever since that day, men have tried to guess where in the region existed the "Mother Lode" or "Mountain of Gold" whence came these riches of Golconda. Humble miners up North, and powerful directors and engineers of great mining companies, dreamed of the time when they should find this Midas matrix and become billionaires overnight.

It was supposed by many prospectors, "sourdoughs" and "chechakos" alike, that the original treasure-house of the Klondike district was a butte known variously as "The Dome" and "King Solomon's Dome," on the slopes of which were the headwaters of many gold-bearing streams.

When The Broadway Department Store was barely five

In Alaskan waters—
Arthur Letts on board
"City of Topeka"

Not much in the way
of comfort awaited
the traveler

At Skagway

EN ROUTE TO ALASKA, 1902

Down the Yukon

An overnight stopping place between Dawson and Eureka Creek

Below—Arthur Letts panning gold outside his cabin on Eureka Creek

Neighbors on Eureka Creek

MINING IN THE KLONDIKE

years old, there came into Arthur Letts' office a prospector who had struck good pay-dirt, but needed funds in order to operate on a larger scale. He told enthusiastically the oft-repeated idea that in ancient times, long before the mammoth and mastodon roamed the region, mighty quartz-ledges had disintegrated and let their golden treasure roll down into the valley. He had staked out a number of claims on Eureka Creek, one of the many that radiate like spokes in a wheel from the common axis of "The Dome," which is a mountain over to the south of Dawson. His enthusiasm was contagious. Would not Arthur Letts purchase proper tools and a boiler that would enable him to thaw out the ground so he could dig deeper? He was willing to give up a half interest in his claims in return for the financial assistance.

Arthur Letts put up the money. He speculated.

A year passed, and the results were disappointing. Letts had a feeling things were not just right. He would go and see for himself. To think was to act. Instead of taking a vacation, he started for Dawson. The journey to Dawson in 1902 was not what it is today. After considerable hardship, including a severe shaking in a train smash, he reached the Yukon River and took a boat down to Dawson City. The trip to Eureka Creek from Dawson was made in a sulky. During this trip he was thrown out of the sulky by the shying of the horse, and his back was injured. On his return journey, a creek they had to cross had swollen to such an extent that the water reached above the waist of Letts and his companion as they sat on the seat, and they had to drive for miles soaked to the skin.

Mr. Letts made many friends in Dawson, and quite a number went to see him leave on the steamer up the Yukon River for the outside. He crossed the White Horse Pass and sailed from Skagway on the "Cottage City." Twenty miles south of Fort Wrangel, during a dense fog at night, the ship was wrecked. The passengers were safely rowed ashore, there to spend a cold and miserable night on the beach, awaiting the dawn and the rescue that, fortunately, came with another day. The "Cottage City" had struck on Island Point, Etolin Island, at almost the exact spot where the steamer "Brixham" was wrecked two years previously—a vessel which was on its way from New York to Skagway with a load of women for the Klondike.

Between Seattle and Los Angeles, the train upon which Arthur Letts was returning home ran into the ditch, and most of the passengers were considerably bruised. That was the last straw. When he ultimately reached his office, the young merchant took from his safe an accident insurance policy and, handing it to his secretary, exclaimed: "*You* talked me into this! Don't ever insure me against accidents any more. This was the first trip for which I ever took out an accident policy, and I have had *nothing but* accidents ever since the day I started."

He had been shaken-up in two railroad wrecks, thrown from a buggy, almost drowned in a river, shipwrecked, and lost his baggage. Yet nothing had occurred for which he could make a claim on the insurance company. He was prejudiced.

In 1905, there was a stampede to the Eureka Creek district; but, in the meantime, the man in whose hands Arthur Letts had left his property had neglected to file the record of the work done on the claims, and as a result the title had reverted to the government and Arthur Letts had no longer any interests in Eureka Creek. His investment, or speculation, if you wish, was a total loss.

This was not the only speculation Arthur Letts made in mines. During a period of twenty-five years he put money into some eight or nine similar ventures, all of them equally unsuccessful. He held what were thought to be some very valuable mining properties in Mexico, but the man who was handling these properties died suddenly. Then came the Revolution; the titles were questioned; unpaid taxes had piled up—and the properties were lost.

All in all, during his life, Arthur Letts invested in mining companies, claims, and oil syndicates, upwards of $100-000.00—every solitary nickel of which proved to be a total loss. That was the result of speculation.

He also put considerable money into a new typewriter. He financed an inventor who was a real genius, and in return received a half-interest in the patents of a machine that was going to revolutionize typewriting. This inventor was a genius in more ways than one. He succeeded in selling a half-interest in his patents to some others besides Arthur Letts. The net result, eventually, was prison for the inventor, and a new page written into the "experience" record of Arthur Letts as he charged off the item to "profit and loss."

A vast agricultural undertaking in Mexico, which a number of his friends were interested in, appealed to him. Into that enterprise he put some $80,000.00. It looked for a while as though the returns would be enormous, but suddenly the picture changed. The same revolution that wiped out his mining interests played equal havoc with the agricultural enterprise, and never did he get a single dollar of return on the money he had invested.

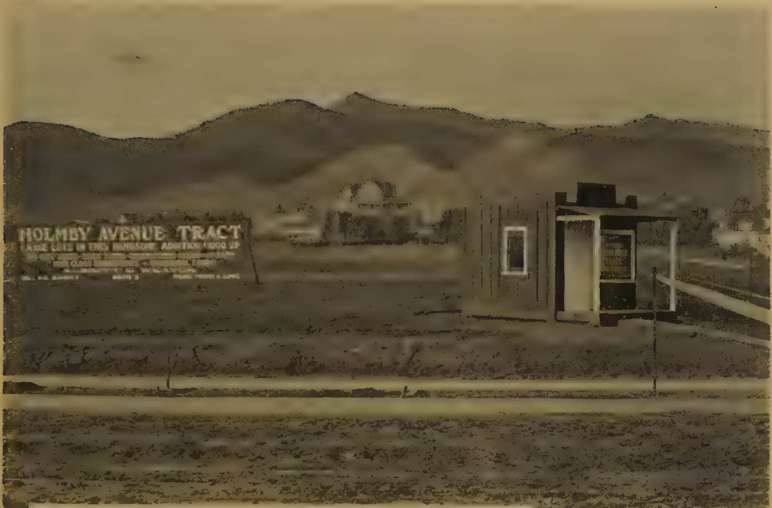
One other loss he experienced was in an attempt made to operate a wholesale house. Misplaced confidence in the man in charge led to complications that eventually ended in Mr. Letts disposing of the business. Perhaps the monetary loss in this venture was offset by the knowledge acquired—knowledge that he was able to put to good use in his retail establishment.

From time to time Arthur Letts invested money in local enterprises that he knew to be good, and with profitable results. He had stock in four or five banks, and at one time was vice-president of one bank, and a director of another; but his growing interests caused him eventually to retire from these responsibilities. He knew he could not give them the attention they should have; and when, one day, a widowed lady told him she had invested her money in the bank because she knew it must be all right if Arthur Letts was a director, he decided it was time to withdraw. That bank today is one of the city's biggest financial institutions; but Arthur Letts didn't like to feel that anyone was investing his or her money in it just because he happened to be a director. The responsibility weighed too heavily upon him.

This man knew thoroughly the fundamentals of two things—the retail dry-goods business, and real estate values. When he confined his investments to what he understood, he made money.

The two outstanding investments of his career, outside of The Broadway Department Store, were the establishment of Bullock's and purchase of the Wolfskill Ranch. The latter marked the culmination of his real estate operations.

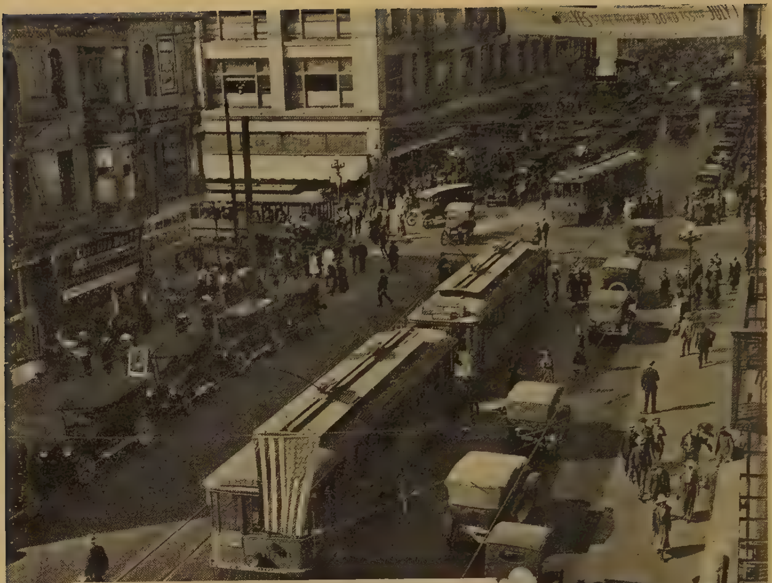
Arthur Letts had always been interested in real estate from the time he purchased the two houses in Toronto with his first savings. When he came out West he bought timber lands in the state of Washington, also sundry lots, although he never realized much on them. Their location was not right. It was in Los Angeles and vicinity where he made his real money in real estate.


HOLMBY AVENUE TRACT
LARGE LOTS IN THIS HANDSOME ADDITION

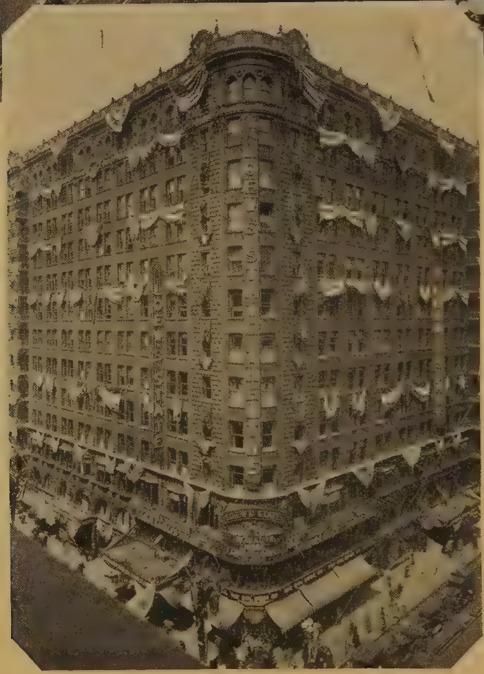
An early subdivision by Arthur Letts—1906. (Hollywood Boulevard in foreground—six inches deep in mud)

The ranch in Hollywood—traded for two cottages at Ocean Park, 1903

The Hollywood ranch. The road in the foreground is now Gower Street



A VISION FULFILLED
Seventh and Broadway, twelve years after Arthur Letts had acquired the Northwest and Southwest corners



Loew's State Building, erected on the Arthur Letts corner at Seventh and Broadway

His first ventures were in Hollywood—or, rather, in the neighborhood where Hollywood stands today. In 1900 that district was known as the Cahuenga Valley. H. J. Whitley, who has often been termed the "father of Hollywood," conceived the idea of making Hollywood a suburb of Los Angeles. He and his associates formed the Los Angeles Pacific Boulevard and Development Company, which company took option on thousands of acres of land lying between Los Angeles and Hollywood, constructed Sunset and Hollywood Boulevards at their own expense, and then disposed of their options on the acreage, now furnished with transportation facilities, at a handsome profit. Arthur Letts was a stockholder in this enterprise, and it served to draw his attention quite forcibly to the district. A considerable portion of his Holmby estate was acquired at a cost of approximately $500.00 an acre. This estate, when finally rounded out, covered an area of one hundred acres.

His first experience in subdividing occurred in 1905, when he and his associates put on the market the "Gem of Hollywood" tract, located near what is now the junction of Vermont Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard. Mr. Letts had a half-interest in the tract, which was sold out completely within eighteen months, at a profit of over 200%.

After that followed a number of other subdivisions. He bought up the land in front of his estate that lay between Franklin Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard, and opened it up as the Holmby Avenue tract. Kenmore Avenue, that runs through the center of this tract, was at that time known as Holmby Avenue—the road that led to Holmby House, the home of Arthur Letts.

One mistake he made before he acquired his Holmby Estate. He owned a ranch in the neighborhood of what is now Gower and Franklin Avenue. As a week-end retreat, he enjoyed it. As a ranch, it was not a success. Labor costs were out of all proportion to the returns. The deficits worried him; so much so, that he traded the ranch for a couple of cottages at Ocean Park. Many times, later on, he regretted his haste and lack of foresight, although it must be admitted that the ranch at that time was in a rather inaccessible location.

It was in 1906 that Arthur Letts commenced to invest large sums in city property, confining his activities to the Seventh and Broadway region. His judgment on realty values was impeccable, and his investments attested the courage of his convictions, although some of his friends thought him reckless; in fact, one of them consulted others about the matter, holding that "something ought to be done to keep him from making such foolish investments." On every dollar so invested he later drew great profits.

He sold the corner of Eighth and Hill, where the Junior Orpheum Building now stands, for $100,000.00 more than he paid for it. That was one of his smallest profits on down-town property. He purchased a lot on Hill Street for a down payment of $40,000.00, and gave a mortgage for the balance. In three months a customer came along who assumed the mortgage, and paid him $70,000.00 to boot. Here was a profit of 75% in a trifle over three months, or at the rate of approximately 250% per annum.

When eating lunch one day at the California Club, Arthur Letts casually asked his table companion where he thought the future center of the down-town business district would be located. His friend studied a minute, and said: "Oh, I suppose in the neighborhood of Seventh and Broadway." Arthur Letts smiled and remarked, "I guess you're right. I bought the Vogel corner today." He acquired the South-West corner of Seventh and Broadway, with a frontage on Broadway of 169 feet, for $980,000.00, or on a basis of $5,800.00 a front foot. In 1919 he leased this property to the Loew Theater interests for ninety-nine years, at a rental of $125,000.00 a year net—the lessee to pay the taxes; or a total of twelve and a-half million dollars during the life of the lease. This was the largest sum ever involved in a lease of Los Angeles property. And Arthur Letts never touched a penny of the money. He immediately placed the lease in Trust, and ordered that the income should be divided amongst the members of his family. He felt that this would be better for them than any insurance or bonds he could leave. Moreover, they would be having the use of the money while he lived. This corner today is perhaps the most valuable in all of California.

When Spain occupied California in 1769, the absolute title to all the land immediately passed to the King. The King, however, was actually in possession only of the ground on which the presidio stood, and such adjoining lands as were needed in connection with the royal service. The natives were still recognized as the owners of territory needed for their subsistence; but the civilizing process they were to be put through would congregate them in the pueblos or very close by, and naturally tend to reduce materially the land occupied in their native state. Thus the country was opened to Spanish settlement, and subsequently the great ranchos were evolved.

The year 1919 found but one of those great ranchos, anywhere near Los Angeles, still intact. It was known of old as the Rancho San Jose de Buenos Aires, and was still so marked on maps of record. It lay between Los Angeles and the sea, and was more popularly known as the Wolfskill Ranch.

John Wolfskill, forty-niner, former State Senator and one of the most enterprising and picturesque men of the rugged pioneer days, was essentially a land developer and, from the time he first set foot in the State, believed implicitly in the greatness of its future. In 1883 he disposed of his 13,000 acre ranch near Escondido, and the following year purchased the Rancho San Jose de Buenos Aires from the original grantees, for a sum of approximately $10.00 an acre. His idea was to hold the land intact and develop it as a ranch. He built there a large, modern house, into which the Wolfskill family was preparing to move at the time of Mr. Wolfskill's death in 1913.

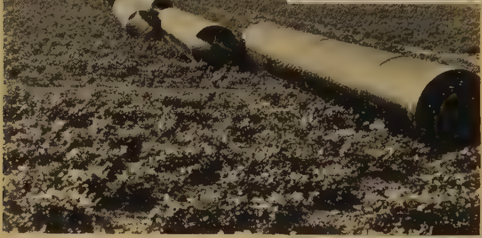
This great ranch, covering an area of 3296 acres, skirting Pico Boulevard on the south for about two miles and extending northward to the foothills three miles away, lay between the Los Angeles Country Club on the east, and the Soldiers' Home and a part of the town of Sawtelle on the west. It long had been coveted by many moneyed investors and had become the prize of prizes in the local land market. Many had been the offers, by real estate syndicates formed for the purpose, to take over the vast acreage; but the owners were difficult to approach and hard to please. Besides, they wanted all cash, and that meant too large a sum for even a wealthy real estate group to command.

Only one man had the vision and the cash, and that man was Arthur Letts. He tendered a certified check for $500,000.00 as evidence of good faith, and agreed to pay an additional $1,500,000.00 upon delivery of title. He thus became the new owner of the last of the undivided land domains lying between Los Angeles and its destiny—a most unusual purchase, even in a city that is accustomed to big realty deals.

As a direct result of this transaction, the decade-long dream of a surburban development, stretching from West

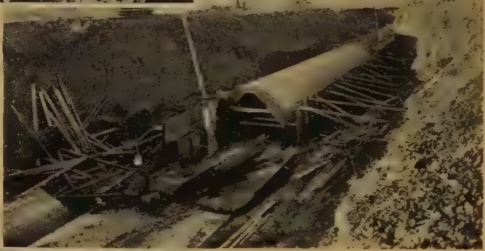
SCENES ON THE
GREAT RANCHO
SAN JOSE DE
BUENOS AIRES

Construction camps were established



Water was brought from distant reservoirs

Below—Streets and Boulevards were laid out and graded



Huge storm drains were installed. *Below*—Roads are covered with asphalt

THE RANCHO
SAN JOSE DE
BUENOS AIRES
BECOMES BUT
A MEMORY

Los Angeles and Hollywood to the sea, became an assured realization of the immediate future. Of course there were some who thought it a pity that this great property was to be subdivided. To them it remained a reminder and a call-back to the older California of the period writers delight to describe as the days of romance. But isn't the present the greater romance? Isn't today more wonderful, with its hurrying thousands eagerly building homes and erecting cities where haciendas once stood, than yesterday, with its half-nomadic civilization moving at ox-cart pace over the barren hills, with here and there a casa of sun-baked bricks, or an occasional hut of mud?

It was Arthur Letts' plan to make it possible for houses to rise on these lands that would be the homes of greater numbers than all the population of Southern California in those older days. He knew that the soil which the pioneers held so cheaply, and from which they drew so little, divided into city lots, with their gardens and their fruit trees, would produce more for the sustenance of the people than ever was done in the happiest of the days of old—even if it did mean that the great Rancho San Jose de Buenos Aires would become but a memory, an incident blended in the vital history of this great epoch of city-building!

That such a plan would call for the expenditure of enormous sums of money, he also knew. Existing boulevards must be widened, miles of streets must be graded and paved and provided with curbs and sidewalks, thousands of shade trees must be planted, water mains, electric light, gas, and ornamental lighting systems must be installed, and the entire property provided with a sewage system and drains. All of this work he entrusted to the Janss Investment Co., a company operated by his son-in-law, Harold Janss, and Dr. Edwin Janss; men who had made an acknowledged success in handling large subdivisions. On one section of 800 acres the road work, ornamental electroliers, parking, storm drains, and sewers, called for an expenditure of two and a-half million dollars, or more than $3,000.00 per acre.

Part of the land between Wilshire Boulevard and Pico Boulevard was set aside for studio sites. On the adjacent land a new townsite was laid out, and named Westwood. The neighboring hills were christened Westwood Hills. The demand for the property caused unit after unit to be opened before street work and improvements could be started. The speed with which activity got under way was one of the biggest realty surprises of the year. Today, Westwood has a population of approximately four thousand; a $100,000.00 grammar school, post office, stores, street car service; in fact, the foundations are rapidly being laid for what in time may become another Hollywood. Who knows?

Westwood Hills is the site for the new University of California in Los Angeles. Not long after Arthur Letts purchased the Wolfskill Ranch he remarked to a group of friends what a wonderful location it would make for the university. The present location of the University of California on Vermont Avenue, in the city of Los Angeles, consists of twenty-five acres. There was a possibility of securing an additional fifteen acres; no more. More than five thousand students are crowded into accommodations that were originally intended for 2500. The rapidly increasing property values, the building-up of the city and the growth of the student body convinced the Regents that some provision would have to be made for a new site greater in area and more remote from the congestion of the city.

In the latter part of 1924, a committee of prominent citizens was appointed to select a site that would be satisfactory, and after reviewing many offers, the final decision was made in favor of the site at Westwood Hills. The Regents wisely decided that the University, in order to give the greatest possible service to the greatest number, should be within easy reach of Los Angeles, the center of population in the South. This 382-acre site had many advantages, independent of the appeal of convenience. It was superbly located, with the mountains forming a background and the ocean near at hand—an ideal setting for a great cultural center, also a stimulatingly healthful spot.

Here, the University will build for the future. It now has capacity to meet its certain destiny. Despite the fact that the standards of admission are constantly being raised, it is inevitable that a student body of not less than 10,000 must soon be accommodated, because each year, from the high schools of this section alone, from 7000 to 8000 young people are graduating as potential university students. On October 25, 1926, in the presence of a great throng, the new site was officially dedicated by the Governor of California.

It is an immense undertaking to build, in two or three years, a great university plant sufficient to accommodate 8000 or 10,000 students, but this is what the plans contemplate. Everything must be constructed, even to the laying-out of the grounds, and it is estimated the final cost will be, approximately, $15,000,000.00.

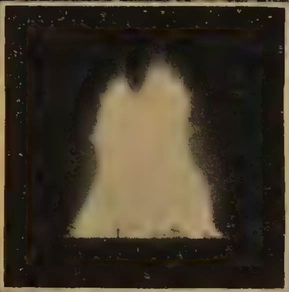
In developing Westwood Hills, a responsibility as great as was ever placed on the shoulders of a community developer has been assumed, because the community surrounding the University campus site must indeed be a criterion of residential desirability. The University authorities will develop the campus upon a single plan, making the University grounds the keynote to which the rest will conform, thus creating of the entire section a symmetrical, harmonious whole.

The choicest of the rolling hill lands have been subdivided into estates ranging in size from three-quarters of an acre up, and named Holmby Hills in memory of the birthplace of Arthur Letts in England. Some of these knoll estates have sold at prices varying from $17,000.00 to $30,000.00 an acre. Many a beautiful diamond loses much of its attractiveness because of an unattractive setting, just as a beautiful piece of property is often handicapped by mediocre surroundings; hence the care with which this property is being developed. Holmby Hills not only is beautiful, but its surroundings will be kept beautiful, in order that the district may achieve great fame from the standpoint of residential charm.

Thus, the men to whom Arthur Letts, in his will, delegated the responsibility of carrying out his wishes, have endeavored to transform the old Rancho San Jose de Buenos Aires from a relic of the bygone past to a modern suburban development linking Hollywood and Beverly Hills to Santa Monica and the sea.

The establishment of Bullock's is really worthy of a chapter to itself. To launch a business fully fledged in a new district, a business that was called upon within six months to weather one of the worst financial panics in American history, and ultimately to achieve renown as the finest dry-goods store in the West, was no mean accomplishment. It was the vision and courage of Arthur Letts that made the enterprise possible. It was the integrity and ability of John G. Bullock that carried it to success.

In order to get the picture in its true perspective, let us go back to 1896. John G. Bullock is speaking: "In January, 1896, I left Paris, a little town of about three thousand people, in the Province of Ontario, Canada, where I had worked in a general country store which sold all kinds



Engineers for the University of California inspecting the new 382-acre site at Westwood Hills. *Center*—Fifteen hundred students perform the "Grizzly Dance" around a huge bonfire on the new campus

Officers and Student Officials of the University of California at Founder's Rock

EXCLUSIVE HOMES ARE RAPIDLY RISING ON HOLMBY HILLS

Holmby Hills

Entrance to Holmby Hills

of merchandise; such a store as you would find in those days in any small town. I arrived in Los Angeles the latter part of January. My greatest ambition was to find work. While the wage I would receive was, of course, a consideration, the one big thing that I wanted was a chance to work. I tried all over Los Angeles to secure such an opportunity. In fact, I tried every place, day after day, with that one idea—to get a job. At that time there were many unemployed, and conditions in general were very bad. The latter part of the following month, February, in looking over the newspaper, as I did every day, I noticed that a bankrupt stock in a store on the corner of Fourth and Broadway was to be placed on sale the following day. Monday I was down at that store bright and early, to make my application. The man told me they had all the help they needed. I stayed around the outside until the store opened at eight o'clock, and then I continued to stay. The store was soon filled with customers and it was necessary to lock the front doors and not let any more in. Later, those who were already in were let out by the rear door to an alley. I went in through the rear door and the same man to whom I had talked was on the floor directing the work and doing everything possible to handle the business. He recognized me and said: 'Do you want to go to work now?' I replied that I did. He said: 'I will give you $2.00 a day;' and I was told to go behind the counter as salesman, which happened to be in the domestics.

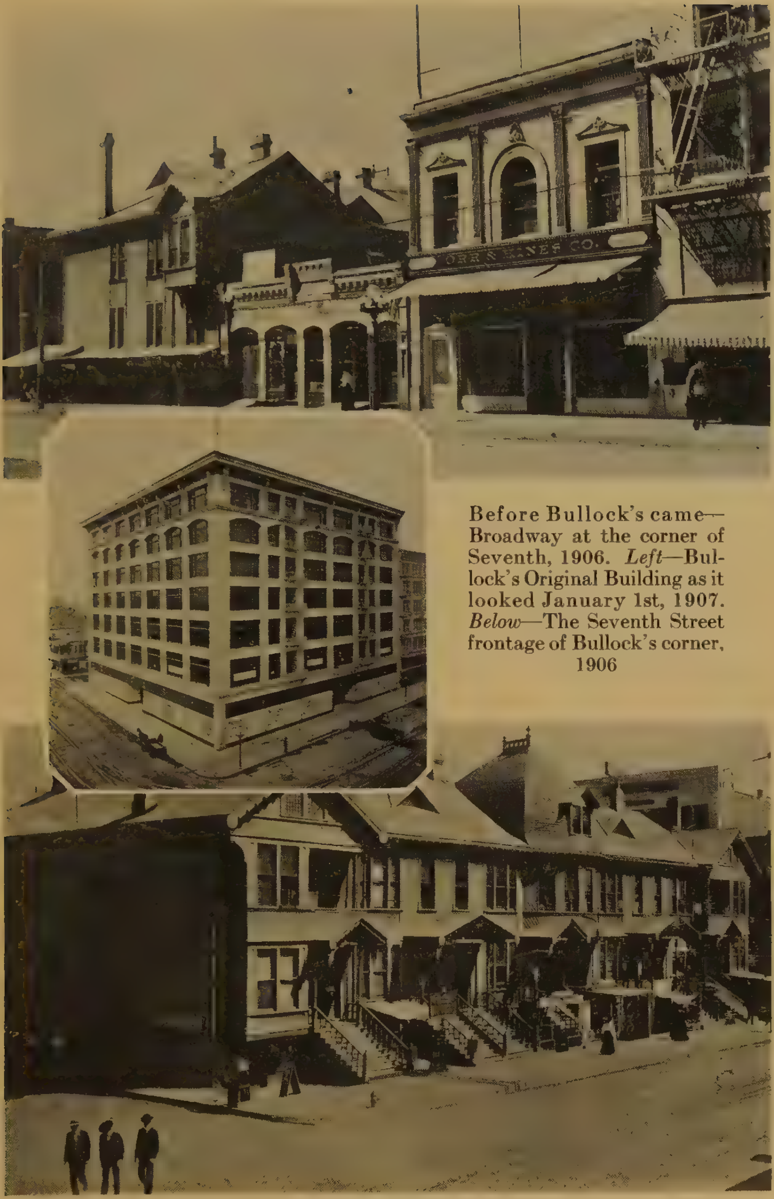
"I was so happy to realize that I had secured employment that, when lunch time came, instead of going to eat, I ran all the way home to tell my folks that I had found work; and I had to run nearly all the way back to the store, the lunch period was so short. During all that day they kept letting people in the front doors and out the back.

The man who had given me a job was Arthur Letts, a man I had never met or heard of before, yet the only man whom I could find in all Los Angeles, after looking continually for over a month, who would even give me a *chance* to work. I did not ask him what he would give me. That overture came from him. All I wanted was work. In two or three days I had worked my way over to the Men's Furnishing Department. No one placed me there. I just seemed to drift that way. Mr. Letts asked me to give him the sizes we needed in celluloid collars, which we were selling for three and one-third cents, an unheard-of price up to that time. That was one of my many duties outside of selling merchandise—to keep him furnished with the sizes we needed in celluloid collars.

"Those strenuous days of buying and selling did not let up. After being at the Broadway four or five months, I was offered, without cost to me and with no salary, a half-interest in a baking business, which at that time was the City Baking Company. I told Mr. Letts that I was going to try it. He said that he would like me to stay with him, as some day he hoped to be able to pay me a salary of $75.00 a month. He did not hesitate to say that he thought I was making a mistake.

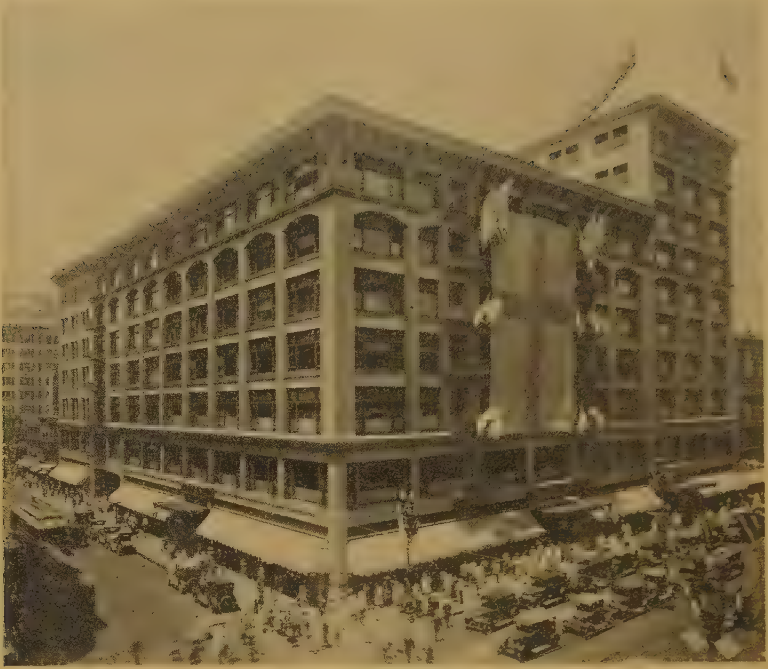
"I tried out the baking business for two or three days, getting up at three o'clock in the morning, riding around the city in one of those bakery wagons at break-neck speed, as the wagons used to go with horses, and after three mornings, I concluded that I did not care for the baking business.

"Following the three days of my bakery experience, a friend put me in touch with a man who was a manager in another store. This manager offered me a position at $15.00 a week, which I did not accept, saying that I would think about it. From there I went back to The Broadway De-



Before Bullock's came—Broadway at the corner of Seventh, 1906. *Left*—Bullock's Original Building as it looked January 1st, 1907. *Below*—The Seventh Street frontage of Bullock's corner, 1906

IN THE BEGINNING



BULLOCK'S—1925

partment Store. That was the third or fourth morning after I had left there. Upon entering I met Mr. Letts, who said: 'Hello, Bullock. Do you want to go back to work?'

"I replied: 'No, I don't know that I do.'

" 'Well, I would like to have you back,' he said.

"I answered: 'Well, I don't know. I have been offered $15.00 a week at another store.'

"After considerable discussion, he said: 'Well, Bullock, I can't pay you $15.00, but I might pay you $13.00 a week,' and again stated: 'Some day I hope to be able to pay you $75.00 a month.'

"I did not go to work that morning, telling him I would think about it. All whom I had met in Los Angeles up to that time wanted me to take the other position; but some way—I don't know why—the next morning I went back to work in the Broadway Department Store and have been directly and indirectly connected with Mr. Letts ever since."

Such is destiny!

As time went on, Mr. Bullock took on some of the responsibilities of buying and ultimately developed into a full-fledged buyer for the Men's Furnishing Department. This man never confined his activities solely to his own department. He worked on the principle, "Do anything—whatever there is to do."

Arthur Letts watched him closely. He gave him added responsibilities. He made him Superintendent, with the responsibility of engaging the help. He saw in John G. Bullock the makings of a fine executive, for he was a man endowed, above everything else, with character. He was just, truthful, temperate, benevolent, magnanimous and sympathetic, and he passed that crucial test of genuine executive ability—he was direct and straightforward with every man.

As The Broadway Department Store grew, it became apparent to all that the ramshackle hodgepodge of passè buildings, whose floors were on different levels, would have to give way to larger and more modern quarters; but there was a question whether a satisfactory lease for a long term could be made. And Arthur Letts was looking ahead. The intersection of Seventh and Broadway fascinated him. That corner was then apparently only a remote possibility as a business section, but with his far-seeing judgment Mr. Letts felt that he would like to be protected in that location in the event he should not be able to make satisfactory arrangements in his present location. Then fortune favored him.

Early in 1906, a new concern with ambitious plans began to build a seven-story modern store at the North-West corner of Seventh and Broadway. Evidently there was more ambition than capital behind the enterprise, for it died a-borning, with the steel work halted at the seventh floor.

The owner was without a tenant, and a tenant for a large building erected and to be equipped for department store purposes was not the easiest thing to find. He called upon Arthur Letts, and laid his cards on the table. Letts was a willing listener. He intimated that he might be interested, provided he was given a low rental for the first ten years—the "pioneering" period. To this the owner, who was the late Mr. Edwin T. Earl, agreed, and Arthur Letts signed a fifty-year lease on the unfinished structure.

Then came the most momentous question of all—who to place in charge? After careful thought the decision was in favor of John G. Bullock, who was instructed to go ahead and organize a company and conserve that location in the event it should be needed for The Broadway Department Store.

That was the birth of Bullock's.

John G. Bullock

P. G. Winnett
Vice-President of
Bullock's

Foster and Kleiser
Initiative —
Bullock's
Broadway - Hill
and - Seventh
Foster and Kleiser
Hospitality
Bullock's
Broadway - Hill
and - Seventh
"One o'Clock Saturdays"
Foster and Kleiser
Ideals —
Bullock's
Broadway - Hill
and - Seventh
Foster and Kleiser
Imagination
Bullock's

THE VOICE OF BULLOCK'S ALONG THE HIGHWAYS

It spoke volumes for the confidence of Arthur Letts in this man, that he should authorize the business to be known solely under the name of "Bullock's" while he, who was putting up all the money, should remain in obscurity. He thought it would be good business strategy to keep the stores entirely separate, not only as accounting units, but before the world. Therefore Mr. Bullock and his associates were saddled with virtually complete responsibility almost from the beginning.

Mr. Bullock severed his connections with The Broadway Department Store on November 1st, 1906. Of the days that followed he has this to say: "To give you some idea of Arthur Letts' policy of giving a man a real opportunity and a chance to go ahead on his own initiative, I did not see or communicate with Mr. Letts in any way regarding Bullock's, until that Saturday afternoon, March 2nd, 1907—four months later—when I called him on the telephone asking him if he would like to see the store, before it opened that evening at eight o'clock for a public reception. He came to the store at six o'clock as per arrangement; looked things over with his keen eye, and gave frank criticism."

That night all roads led to Bullock's big electric signs. Thousands crowded into Broadway and intersecting streets, and it was a perfect jam for blocks in every direction. Men, women and children, women with babies in their arms, street cars, automobiles, and carriages, were all packed together, and at times it was impossible for either one or the other to move.

The handsome, cream-colored building was ablaze with light throughout its seven stories, basement, and roof garden. Standing high above the roof, the single word "BULLOCK'S" could be seen from the outskirts of the city in every direction. People who may have been on the streets with no intention of going to the opening, naturally gravitated toward the blaze of light, and only a fractional part of the many thousands who went that way were able to get inside, but the whole building was crowded for nearly three hours with the throng constantly coming and going. The opening of Bullock's surpassed anything ever seen in the city. No such crowds had ever gathered in Los Angeles except, possibly, at La Fiesta.

Bullock's opened for business the following Monday. Many things were not right; many things not as good as they should be; but they had the confidence of the people of Los Angeles, and on that rainy day, twenty years ago, transacted a good business.

Two other large stores were started in Los Angeles at about the same time: the Central Department Store and the Bon Marchè; but, of the trio, only Bullock's survived.

Before a month had passed, something unforeseen became apparent. The finer merchandise was moving rapidly, the more "popular" merchandise was barely moving at all. It was evident that the public expected Bullock's to carry a stock of higher grade merchandise—something of a more exclusive character. Bullock's buyers were immediately rushed to market in order that the store might be replenished with stocks of fine merchandise.

The financial panic of 1907 broke in October of that same year, but when the storm was weathered, Bullock's had made a good start for a new organization, and the following year they were progressing in rapid strides. The progress had not been made, however, without many trials and heartburnings. There were days when ten customers on the main floor marked unusual activity; many weeks when customers tendered paper script instead of money; days when the passing traffic dwindled almost to zero; a period when one whole floor was emptied because of lack of business and merchandise to fill it. Yet Bullock's never lost heart. Day by day they continued to gain the confidence of the public. They had established a policy, and nothing could persuade them to deviate from it.

By the time The Broadway Department Store had made new leases on its present property, Bullock's had developed beyond expectations. Their credit business, commenced with 1000 selected accounts, was a demonstrated success. Their clientele demanded "the best." So Arthur Letts decided to have two stores thereafter, and one day astounded Mr. Bullock by announcing his decision without prelude or preliminary.

Moreover, he made it interesting financially for Mr. Bullock and his aides to exert themselves to the utmost of their ability. Mr. Bullock's right-hand man—Mr. P. G. Winnett, who is now the Vice-President of Bullock's—had been employed by Arthur Letts as a "cash boy" when The Broadway first opened. His duties were to run errands within the store, and during his spare time to string shoe buttons, for all of which he received a "salary" of two dollars a week. But it so happened that this lad always did a little more than he was supposed to do, because there was work for everybody with that inclination. He, too, "drifted" over to the Men's Furnishing Department, and Mr. Bullock passed along to him the job of keeping up the sizes of celluloid collars; and in due time he became manager of the department. When Mr. Bullock was instructed to organize the new business, he persuaded Winnett to go as his chief assistant. With one exception, none of the other executives was a "Broadway" man.

This group of men put forth every endeavor to build a business that would be known for its courtesy, its sincerity, and its friendliness; to build a business that would be distinctive and different; to build a business that would be notable for its service; to build a business with one ultimate aim—the satisfaction of every customer.

Those were the days when the spirit of Bullock's was born—the days when Bullock's ideal was created—the days when everyone worked and planned to make Bullock's such a store as Los Angeles had not known before.

As the years passed, the phenomenal growth of this institution attracted wide attention. The year 1928 will see the erection of a ten-story structure on the corner of Seventh and Hill Streets. When this building is completed it will bring the total floor area occupied by Bullock's, including their Service building, up to twenty acres.

Additional frontage on Hill Street has also been acquired to provide for the growth of the business in years to come.

A "store with a vision," ever striving to follow their ideal, an ideal that is being impressed more and more indelibly on the character of the business as the days go by, an ideal that is being expressed more and more effectively as the store grows greater in strength and understanding, an ideal which is printed in clear type on the more than ten million sales checks that leave the store during a year:

> To build a business that will never know completion but that will advance continually to meet advancing conditions—
>
> To develop stocks and service to a notable degree—
>
> To create a personality that will be known for its strength and friendliness—
>
> To arrange and co-ordinate activities to the end of winning confidence by meriting it—
>
> To strive always to secure the satisfaction of every customer.

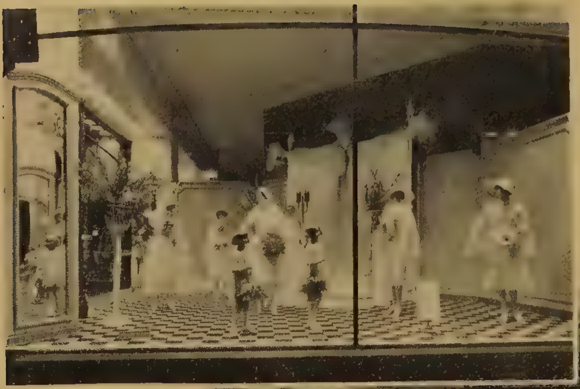
The Public Telephone
Service

A Public Rest-room that is the last word in comfort. *Below and left*—The Foyer adjoining the Tea Room

Entrance to the General Offices

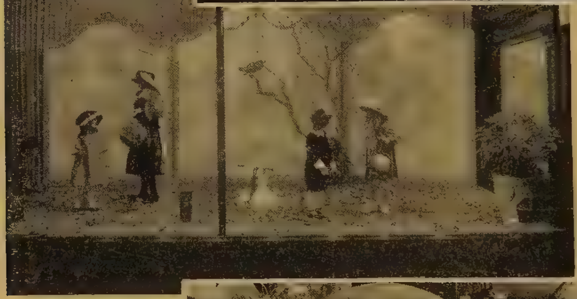
IN A STORE THAT
IS "DIFFERENT"

ART AS EXPRESSED IN WINDOWS



The Wedding

Right–The Trousseau for Baby



Autumn Days

When Winter Comes

While a considerable number in the trade had known for years that Arthur Letts owned Bullock's, the public generally did not know it until the celebrated "Bullock's Bridge" controversy occurred in 1921.

When Bullock's acquired the Seventh Street building, it was necessary to bridge over a blind alley in order to connect with the floors of their main building on Broadway; otherwise, the newly acquired building would be isolated and of little value to them. Permission to erect the necessary bridge structure was requested from the City Council, who in turn referred the request to the Public Safety Committee. A number of public hearings were held before that body, and the application was discussed in detail, with the result that the committee recommended that the Council adopt the necessary ordinance, which it did.

The permit granted, however, was revocable. Bullock's, rather than be subject to uncertainty or attack under a revocable permit, offered at the time to pay a just rental, and thus make its grant secure. The matter was referred to the City Attorney, who ruled that the City could not accept any compensation because the property was not owned by the City, and hence the City had nothing to sell. Bullock's later renewed the offer to compensate if any legal way could be found whereby the City could accept compensation. It may be added, in passing, that none of the other business permits of a similar character that had been granted throughout the City was paid for—and for exactly the same reason; i.e., the City could not legally accept compensation for a thing it did not own.

However, Bullock's proposition had been so fair, the whole project so fully explained to the City Council, not once alone but several times; the plans revised by the City authorities, and the entire transaction carried out in the light of publicity to such an extent, that they naturally felt certain that the City would stand by its act when once the permit was issued; and, as evidence of their implicit faith, went ahead with their plans for improvement. That was in September, 1919.

In January, 1921, two Los Angeles newspapers, the "Examiner" and the "Herald," launched an attack on Bullock's and Arthur Letts, and urged the Council to revoke its permit (after Bullock's had expended more than $200,000 on the new structure) on the ground that Bullock's had been granted something to which they were not entitled; and for four months these papers were flooded with glaring headlines and obnoxious cartoons, in an endeavor to have the City of Los Angeles revoke the permit. They attacked the Council members who insisted on fair play, and worked upon the mob psychology of the people to such an extent that the matter became a political issue.

The City Council requested the Los Angeles Realty Board to appraise the rental value of the proposed structure, and this body reported to the Council that it considered an annual rental of $5,370.00 would be more than fair. When, later, another committee of representative citizens, in the thought that their suggestion would end all controversy, proposed a payment—or "donation," if you please—of $12,000.00 a year, Bullock's immediately adopted the proposal and, to make the matter binding, it was agreed that the proposal should appear on the ballot at the primary election, to be held in May. Although no rental had ever been charged by the city for a similar privilege, Bullock's were at all times desirous of compensating the city for any conceivable public property right affected by the permit.

These two newspapers were instrumental in getting two other propositions on the same ballot, calling for revoca-

THE GALERIE DE CHARME

A masterpiece of arrangement, of utility and of art

A surpassingly beautiful Salon devoted to the care and cultivation of feminine charms

Twenty-seven specially designed tables are used for the purpose of manicuring

The Fountain in the Temple of Beauty

Upper left—A dignified setting in the Linen Room. *Upper right*—Where Gifts of Distinction and Difference abound. *Lower left*—A rendezvous of the World's Finer Stationery. *Lower right*—Music on the air—the Radio Section

STOCKS AND SERVICE DEVELOPED TO A NOTABLE DEGREE tion of the permit. Fortunately, Arthur Letts and Bullock's were not without champions. This amazing campaign had won them many friends. The city's leading men came out unqualifiedly in their favor, and such organizations as the Chamber of Commerce, the Municipal League, Business Men's Co-operative Association, Wholesale Dry-Goods Association, Merchants and Manufacturers Association, Associated Garment Manufacturers, Retail Dry-Goods Association, Retail Shoe Dealers, Retail Furniture Dealers, Retail Meat Dealers, the Music Trades Association, 100% Club, and sundry others, passed resolutions of endorsement and had them inserted in the public press, urging the people to vote for the ordinance in favor of Bullock's.

When election day came, and the votes were tallied, the result was most interesting. The ordinance in favor of Bullock's was carried by a majority of six to one, and the two propositions sponsored by the two newspapers were defeated almost three to one. Thus Arthur Letts and Bullock's were completely vindicated at the bar of public opinion.

When Arthur Letts passed away and Uncle Sam sent his appraisers to determine the value of the estate this merchant prince had left, they decided that the business of Bullock's, which Arthur Letts had launched just sixteen years previously with an original capital of $250,000.00, had progressed to such an extent as to warrant a valuation of approximately seven million dollars.

Among other assets of his estate was considerable life insurance. There are many who regard life insurance as one of the best forms of investment, because it gives, after one deposit, an instant guarantee to a much larger amount than the deposit, and not infrequently becomes more profitable to an estate than any other investment that could be made.

Arthur Letts had been interested in life insurance ever since that memorable March morning in 1885, at the outbreak of the Riel Rebellion, when the ubiquitous life insurance agent maintained his reputation by tapping soldiers on the shoulder at the Union Station in Toronto, and politely asking: "In view of all the hardships and dangers to which you will be exposed, don't you want to get your life insured?"

During the intervening years Arthur Letts had seen scores of widows and daughters of the well-to-do pleading for jobs, on the verge of poverty, bewildered by the sudden collapse of competence. During a press interview on the subject of life insurance, just a few months prior to his death, he said:

> "That rich man is indeed poor who fails to provide iron-clad income assurance to his family, commensurate with his own industry and perspicacity. Yet many affluent men fail in this manner.
>
> "I have seen their widows in distress, driven to desperate straits because the men were only good life-time providers. Men who wouldn't think of entrusting management of their business to others, blithely entrust their ESTATES to others. They expect their women folk, untrained in business and suddenly bereft of their guidance, by native wisdom or sheer chance, to conserve the endowment. Funds are unprotected against problematic reinvestments, often resulting in total loss.
>
> "Even if one's business or profession permits but a modest withdrawal of capital for such purposes, every man owes it to his family to set such an amount aside, under a trust arrangement, an insurance annuity or a "foolproof" arrangement guaranteeing a monthly or periodical income that can't be tampered with. He can thus relieve himself of a great anxiety and actually see his family enjoy the full fruits of his earning capacity.
>
> "The urgency of such an arrangement was impressed upon me personally many years ago. Long since I made provision for my own family—and I speak of this here merely because of its possible suggestive value to others, not with any vain-glory.
>
> "They receive monthly checks under a 99-year trust instrument, based

upon a ground rent lease for a $2,000,000.00 business building, running for a similar period. Their respective interests cannot be sold, hypothecated, or clouded by judgment. Continued income is thus assured during their lifetime, and expenditures necessarily gauged upon a month to month legacy.

"If I had a comparatively small income, I should probably buy an insurance annuity for my family, to the limit of my ability.

"No man knows when he's going to pass out, nor in just what condition his business may be at the time. Observation and experience have proven to me that it pays to play safe with what is intended for one's family. And the best way to play safe is while you are still alive."

It was with the aid of business life insurance that Arthur Letts endeavored to protect his business investments before and after his death. At the time of his death he was carrying policies in 32 companies totaling $1,800,000.00, all of which was payable to his businesses. Only ten other men in the entire United States carried a larger amount than this.

CHAPTER VII

The Heart of the Man

CHAPTER VII

THE HEART OF THE MAN

ARTHUR LETTS was a man who entered into the activities and interests of life not half-heartedly, not coldly, but sympathetically, enthusiastically. His mind and heart heard and responded in big ways and little ways. He tried to do his level best to live and carry on his business in accordance with the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount—to follow the principles laid down by the greatest Teacher the world has known.

There is such a thing as immortality—not alone the immortality that follows the passing over the mysterious river of death, but the immortality of influence, also. This immortality lives in the inspiration it leaves for those who come under its beneficent force. There is no doubt but that the influence of Arthur Letts has been, and will be, a great inspiration to those who know the wonderful, fascinating, magnetic story of his life.

The large sums of money and the vast amount of time he devoted to worthy causes were illustrations of his desire to help others, but many were the tokens of his remembrance which he constantly sent to those with whom his life had been connected.

Among the instances of his kindly memory was a £10 note which he sent every Christmas to the old teamster who used to look after the horses on the farm where he spent his boyhood days. As long as the old man lived, this gift came to him from the lad who often went through his pockets for candies; the lad who had crossed the ocean and had made good.

Naturally, it was his employees' welfare that stood closest to his heart. His intense sympathy for the worker was apparent from the very beginning of his business career. He looked upon his workers as his "family," and in the early years would entertain them at his home. Being a very human man, he was apt to let his heart dictate in many matters; nevertheless, the feeling engendered by his liberality and friendliness toward his employees produced results that could have been brought about by no other means. It is small wonder that his employees felt they had a friend who would stand by them loyally in important matters of their daily work. It gave a sense of surety that helped to lift much of the anxiety and fear that are part of the wage-earner's lot. As a result, these employees have talked "Broadway Department Store" at all times and in all places, thus creating a mighty influence that has worked night and day for the advancement of the firm's interests, largely through which the Store bounded into popular favor and still continues to forge ahead in its chosen path. Probably in no other large store in the world is there a more loyal spirit to the firm for which they work than that existing among The Broadway's employees. This store spirit is not a tangible thing; but it makes for courtesy in service, develops pride in work, and gives the public the feeling that The Broadway employees are loyal because they are being well treated.

As far back as the Spanish-American War, when his business and cash resources were relatively small, Arthur Letts offered full salary during absence from the store to all employees volunteering for service, and agreed to pension the family of any employee who should lose his life during the war, to the full amount of the salary the employee was receiving at the time of enlistment.

Arthur Letts broke many precedents, and all through his business career he increasingly introduced features for the welfare of his workers that, if not entirely unknown before, were at least new to Los Angeles. His innovations were based on the same principles of brotherliness and justice that underlay his dealings with the public. These simply worked out in new ways for his employees.

Never, during his entire career, did this merchant permit any work on Sundays that could possibly be avoided. "Business must not interfere with Sundays" was a rule that was never broken, except in an extreme emergency, such as urgent repairs to machinery.

Of the innovations for the welfare of the workers, one that had the most far-reaching results was the institution of a school in the Store for the younger employees. Back in 1901, a young cash boy, through his exceptional brightness, had unconsciously worked his way into his employer's heart, and one day Arthur Letts said to the boy: "What do you intend to become when you grow up?" "It's hard to say, sir," the boy replied. "I have to work to support mother, and so I cannot go to school." While pondering over the boy's remark, Arthur Letts realized that the younger employees were handicapped through their inability to take advantage of their regular school education, and the idea came to him that it would be a great benefit to the juveniles if he were to inaugurate a school in his store. He communicated with the Board of Education and procured one of the foremost teachers in the city. When the school first opened, there were twenty-one pupils. In a few years the attendance had risen to approximately one hundred daily. With the increase in attendance had come also an extension of the school work along lines especially designed to be of practical use to the pupils. In organizing this school, Arthur Letts had in mind just one thing—the desire to make the pupils more efficient, to give them an equipment for the battle of life which they might otherwise be unable to acquire. Gradually the course of study was enlarged and improved until it included the fundamental branches of a complete business education: Arithmetic, grammar, composition, spelling, writing, history, geography, civil government and physiology. One hour and a-half each morning was allowed every employee under eighteen years of age in which to attend this school. The full course covered a period of four years, and this time was given to them freely, in addition to all necessary books, etc. Prominent educators manifested much interest, visiting the school often to inspect the work accomplished, and to address the pupils.

As evidence of the high plane upon which the institution was placed, graduates were permitted to enter the Los Angeles High Schools direct from this school in The Broadway Department Store. Many Broadway pupils who re-entered the public schools, after an absence passed in The Broadway service, found themselves graded higher than would have been the case had they continued in the public institution—to the envy of their former classmates. The graduating exercises were looked forward to with as much interest and importance as those of the public schools of the city. The largest hall suitable for the purpose was engaged, yet many people were turned away.

Graduating class from The Broadway school—1911

The old school room

Marching to the
Station

The gaily decorated cars attract attention—1902

ANNUAL OUTING
BROADWAY DEPT. STORE

An afternoon
in Rubio
Canyon

EMPLOYEES' ANNUAL OUTINGS

In 1912 a State law was passed making it compulsory for all children to attend public school until they had reached at least the eighth grade. This, of course, meant the closing of the school; therefore the great work of this merchant was only outrivaled in the State by the State itself, and this after he had carried on the school for eleven years, at a cost to himself personally, in salaries to the teachers, for the necessary supplies, and in the time spent by the scholars in attending the school, of upwards of one hundred thousand dollars. Yet Arthur Letts would have been the last man to regard The Broadway school wholly as a philanthropic institution. He realized thoroughly that an educated employee, trained to efficiency in the very line of his calling, was much more valuable than one without training. He readily admitted that the school was doing a valuable work, not only for its pupils but for The Broadway Department Store; he knew that the children, realizing the glorious opportunities afforded them, were singing the Store's praises and that their sentiments were voiced by their elders, forming an almost endless chain of most potent influence working for the growth and advancement of Broadway Department Store interests.

From this seemingly simple act of instituting a school for juvenile employees, developed all the great educational work that is now carried on in the store. With the closing of the original school, Arthur Letts urged the young men in his employ to join the night classes of the Y. M. C. A., and agreed to pay all of the educational tuition of anyone who needed his help financially in order to take up a night course of study. He made it clear that his offer was not one of charity, but was an expression of his desire to help those who were helping him to build up his growing business. He realized there was a marked tendency to demand more education and specialized training in young men and women now entering business, than in years gone by, and he felt that his constant concern should be for the young men and women that came in at the bottom, because from them he foresaw the ones who must ultimately come to the top.

For the benefit of the girls he brought out from Boston a graduate of Mrs. Prince's famous School of Salesmanship, and thus the educational aspect of salesmanship became a prominent feature in the Store's government, the workers receiving an ever-growing education and at the same time earning their own livelihood. Today a special staff is maintained for the purpose of providing new employees with adequate and interesting training in methods and merchandise, and of directing others to improved ways of pursuing their work. Lectures on fashions, textiles, interior decoration, and business topics are given by members of this staff and by lecturers from outside institutions.

From the time of the starting of the business, the shorter working day had been an ideal close to Arthur Letts' heart, and with the passing of the years the working period was continually shortened. At first the hours were long—employees had to be at the store at 7:30 A.M., and the store did not close until 6 P.M., and on Saturday night it was 10 P.M. before the closing-gong rang. Half-holidays were something unknown, and for many years overtime work was the rule rather than the exception. There are many who can recall the even cheerful attitude which salespeople of that date assumed towards the long hours of work. The supply exceeded demand for clerks. To get a position and hold it was the chief concern. But Arthur Letts did not wait for the workers to cry with Tennyson:

> "*Ah why*
> *Should life all labor be?*"

He had never forgotten his own early days of hard work from early morning to late at night, and as soon as he felt himself firmly established and holding the confidence of the public, he put into practice his determination to make life easier for his own employees.

In the summer of 1898, just two years after The Broadway Department Store was established, he decided that his people should have a half-holiday each week during the months of July and August. The half-holiday movement, so generously launched by him at a time when most men situated as he was would have been scheming to get two or three extra hours' work from their employees each week instead of lessening their load to the extent of one afternoon in every six, not only gained friends in untold numbers for his business, but went far beyond the confines of The Broadway Department Store and lightened the load for employees in other Los Angeles establishments; for it encouraged other merchants to follow in The Broadway's footsteps. For many years the first Summer half-holiday was celebrated by a trip to one or other of the nearby beaches, Arthur Letts paying all expenses. As the Store grew in size, this plan eventually had to be abandoned, for it became impossible to find a caterer who could handle such an immense proposition satisfactorily. Marching in parade formation to a nearby station, where special trains of gaily decorated cars awaited them, and preceded by some well-known band, this happy Broadway family caused much comment. · There are many in the Store today who look back upon those annual outings as beacon-lights marking the progress of the years.

Another happy recollection the older employees have is of the evenings when they used to go in a body to the Orpheum Theater as guests of Arthur Letts—a delightful aftermath to the annual Christmas rush. The year 1906 saw the last of these theater parties, for the number of employees had grown beyond the seating capacity of the theater.

In the year 1902, Mr. Letts announced that everyone working for him more than nine hours a day should receive overtime pay. This continued until the State eight-hour law for women went into effect in 1912, when it became impossible for a woman to work more than eight hours a day under any conditions. The men still continued to draw overtime pay, however, and the ruling still holds good to all male employees receiving less than thirty dollars a week.

The following year, 1903, Arthur Letts granted to all of his employees who had been in the store one year, a week's vacation on full pay. This ruling was broadened from time to time so that, today, all employees who have been in the store three years receive two weeks vacation on full pay, and those who have been five years in the business receive three weeks vacation with full pay.

"Open Saturday Nights" was the next tradition to be swept aside, and this took a lot of courage, for Saturday night was the busiest time of the week. Words fail to draw an adequate picture of the scene in the Store on Saturday nights. Young men and their sweethearts, middle-aged men and their wives and families—they were there by the thousands, buying merchandise that in many instances could just as well have been purchased during the week. Hundreds more added themselves to the festive scene as sight-seers. On the nights before Christmas the crowds that thronged the Store became so dense that chains had to be placed across the entrances and people admitted in relays after others had had an opportunity to pass out. But Arthur Letts, looking on, saw something more than the satisfaction of customers. He saw the weariness of the people on the other side of the counters. It was a choice between benefiting the public and benefiting his employees. Decision fell in favor of the employees. In January, 1904, he addressed a letter to the Merchants and Manufacturers Association:

> Gentlemen:
>
> I believe the time has come for the stores in this city to close at 6 o'clock Saturday evenings. I am sure that this movement could be made general were it endorsed and agitated by the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association. If all the stores were to close on Saturday evenings, none would be harmed and the numerous employees greatly benefited. This is a movement which could be handled more successfully by your association than by any individual; for, were any individual to make the move, he would be accused of having some personal interest to be benefited; whereas, the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association was organized for mutual benefit, and this work appears to me to be clearly within your province. In this hustling age monetary considerations are apt to engross the employer's attention to the exclusion of the employee's interests. I believe that the health and happiness of my most humble employee is of greater importance than the profits of my business.
>
> I would suggest that this matter be brought before your next meeting and a movement started toward this end. I firmly believe that with the support of the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association there would be little difficulty in getting every store of any consequence in Los Angeles to close at 6 o'clock Saturday evenings, and a great amount of good would be accomplished, thereby.
>
> Yours respectfully,
> ARTHUR LETTS.

This started the ball rolling. There were merchants who thought it a merely visionary idea, surrounded by all sorts of obstacles. These men had to be persuaded. It took time. In the summer of 1906, however, Arthur Letts had the great pleasure of seeing his suggestion bear fruit. In June of that year the leading dry-goods merchants and department stores of the city announced that they had agreed to close their stores at 6 o'clock every Saturday after September 1st, and also to give their clerks a half-holiday every Saturday during July and August. Arthur Letts gave up his established custom of Thursday half-holidays during the summer months, and adopted Saturday instead, in order to be in harmony with the other merchants.

But even the daily 6 P.M. closing did not satisfy the Chief of The Broadway Department Store. He decided to chop off still another hour in favor of his employees. On the first day of January, 1910, the following announcement appeared in the daily papers:

ANNOUNCEMENT

1910's NEW BUSINESS HOURS

OPEN 8:30 A.M. CLOSED 5:30 P.M.

This Announcement to the buying public concerning the new business hours of The Broadway Department Store is of vital importance.

The progressive spirit outlined in our 1910 policies is well reflected in this advanced idea of modern store-keeping.

The new order of things that permits hundreds and hundreds of employees to have an additional hour to themselves is sure to work inestimable good, and will make up more than a hundred-fold for the slight inconvenience to the shopping public, who will be glad to plan their shopping-time to comply with the new 1910 business hours.

OPEN AT 8:30 A.M.
CLOSED AT 5:30 P.M.

This is Arthur Letts' New Year's gift to the Broadway employees. Mr. Letts has taken this bold step feeling that the time was ripe for the lessening of the hours of labor for the store employees, and by the co-operation of the buying public we trust the new order of things may become general.

SHOP BETWEEN 8:30 AND 5:30
ARTHUR LETTS
BROADWAY DEPARTMENT STORE

Two years later, the working hours were still further reduced, the store opening at 9 A.M. instead of 8:30 A.M., although this was largely from a standpoint of convenience occasioned by the operation of the State eight-hour law governing women.

These benefits of shorter working hours that Arthur Letts gave his employees showed the man's great generosity, for the cost in dollars and cents was large. Catering to the popular trade, the loss of the Saturday night business during the first year amounted to several hundred thousand dollars. The one hour chopped off the working day in 1910 automatically raised the salary expense 11%. But to this phase of the situation Arthur Letts never gave a second thought.

On the afternoon of July 3rd, 1919, Mr. Letts sent out word that he had something to say to his employees after the store closed. At 5:30 P.M. some fifteen hundred of them gathered on the main floor, and when the Chief appeared on the scene and told them that henceforward they would be given a half-holiday every Saturday afternoon throughout the year, the cheers which greeted his remarks could be heard for a city block, and lasted for several minutes. Arthur Letts took this step in his employees' behalf, hoping that other merchants would do likewise. In 1925, the trustees of the Arthur Letts estate reluctantly decided that the best interests of the business would be served by withdrawing the regular Saturday half-holiday and giving the employees, in lieu thereof, a lengthened vacation period.

It had always been a source of regret to Mr. Letts that the Store's annual outings had been abandoned. He realized the changing sentiment of the times, and the great difficulties in handling so many people; yet there was always a longing to see another outdoor gathering of his workers.

On June 17th, 1922, he would be sixty years of age. He would give a garden party at his beautiful Hollywood home, and it should be the largest garden party ever planned in the Southland. The magnificent gardens were made ready, and all his employees at The Broadway and at Bullock's were invited. Five thousand of them accepted the invitation.

It was a colorful scene. A band was in attendance, and an orchestra played for dancing on the tennis courts that had been turned into canopied dancing pavilions. Spanish troubadours sauntered about strumming their guitars; from the terrace overlooking the formal garden the combined choruses of Bullock's and The Broadway Choral Societies, together with a number of soloists, rendered selections; wandering fortune tellers "pitched camp" at divers points of vantage, the while esthetic dancers, imitative of the nymphs and satyrs, darted about the wooded sections. In brief, employees and their families participated in and witnessed a combined outdoor display and festival of rare distinctiveness. There were several present who could not but contrast the wonderful gathering with the original outing of twenty-four years ago. The same thoughts must have been in the mind of Arthur Letts when he remarked how large "his family" had grown; and "how happy they all look." "Next year we will give them even a better party than this," he said; but, unfortunately, "next year" never came.

There were people who accused Arthur Letts of making his profits out of labor. They said that his women employees were underpaid, that they could not live on the money received, and that they were driven into questionable methods of earning a living. These accusations he felt very keenly, and when in 1913 the Governor of California

Enjoying the gardens

Employees' Garden Party at the Arthur Letts Home, June 17, 1922

The Sixtieth Milestone. Arthur Letts greeting his employees at his Birthday Garden Party

EMPLOYEES' ENTERTAINMENTS OF OTHER DAYS

announced his intention to appoint a Minimum-Wage Commission, he thought it was a golden opportunity to silence these insinuations for all time. On March 14th he telegraphed Governor Hiram W. Johnson as follows:

"I notice with great satisfaction that you declared your intention to name a commission to investigate women's wages preparatory to establishing a minimum wage. Personally I have been agitating this both in Los Angeles and San Francisco. It is a source of great satisfaction to me that today, after a meeting with our merchants of this city, including all department stores, the following message was sent to the California Retail Dry-Goods Association at San Francisco: 'Resolved, That the Retail Dry-Goods Merchants of Los Angeles, Calif., favor the appointment of a commission to investigate wage conditions with the view of establishing a minimum wage for women, said commission to include adequate representation of employers of labor,' which you undoubtedly will receive with their indorsement of your action.

"Further, I want to place myself at your disposal to help in every way that I possibly can to bring about a better condition to the working women of California. ARTHUR LETTS."

He followed this up with a number of articles on the subject in various trade journals, in which he reviewed the entire minimum-wage problem, combating the idea that legislation for a minimum amount of salary for women and girls in dry-goods and department stores would injure the proprietors of such establishments. On the contrary, he held that the retail merchant could well afford to boost the movement for such legislation. During a press interview in New York, he remarked:

"In the slanderous statement of writers regarding the morality of department store girls, a great wrong has been done and it is a wonder to me that the girls themselves have not taken the matter into their own hands and fought back, for their character has been affronted and their good name assailed.

I believe many of the articles that have been written have been inspired by visionary writers who wish to give color to the article in hand and give no thought to the facts."

Speaking at the annual banquet of the National Retail Dry-Goods Association in New York, in 1914, he dwelt at some length on this subject, saying, among other things:

> "The day of a minimum wage for women has come. You will have to meet it. And what harm is it going to do? It becomes precisely the same as other expense accounts.
>
> "With the minimum wage there will be no injustice and no advantage taken. Hitherto the law of supply and demand fixed the wage schedule. Henceforth it will be EFFICIENCY.
>
> "Anticipate the minimum wage by consulting with your school boards and arranging to install in your local schools, vocational training for mercantile efficiency."

Several newspapers commented editorially upon his remarks—one of them in the following words:

> "There has been altogether too much talk about the ruination of shop girls, and Mr. Letts voiced a strong protest, upholding the young women who work in stores as the equal morally of any class of women. From recent plays and muck-raking articles one would—if not mentally braced against such a suggestion—receive the impression that shop girls, as a rule, are continually on the lookout for 'the easiest way.' Mr. Letts' authoritative defense comes at an opportune time."

Having taken during the whole course of his business career such a vital interest in his employees, he felt that the time had come when he could no longer refrain from raising his voice against the unwarranted statements that were then being made. It was a source of great satisfaction to him when the minimum-wage law was passed and the subject ceased to be a topic of insinuation.

In the beginning of things, Arthur Letts was able to deal personally with the troubles and sicknesses of those in his employ, and countless are the stories of his kindness and beneficence in this respect. But as the Store grew in size and the employees in number, he urged upon the latter the advisability of organizing a Sick-Benefit Society, in order that those in need of help on account of sickness could be properly cared for. Thus, in 1904, the Mutual Benefit Association was launched, and has been in continuous operation ever since. Today it has approximately 1500 members. It was a number of years before the Association was on a self-supporting basis, during which period Arthur Letts personally met the deficits and often made liberal donations to the organization, so heartily did he approve of the work being carried on. Membership on the part of the Store employees is entirely optional.

Out of the Mutual Benefit Association, with its dances and other entertainments, given from time to time, there grew the Arthur Letts Employees Association, of which every Store employee is automatically a member. This association was formed by the employees for mutual improvement and entertainment in things musical, dramatic, literary, social, physical, etc., and, like the Benefit Association, was strongly backed by Mr. Letts. All the employees' activities of today, such as dances, minstrel shows, concerts, plays, ball games, etc., are sponsored by this Association. The Choral Society has distinguished itself in local musical circles, its concerts having drawn packed houses and much favorable press comment. There is no question but that these varied interests of education and recreation, entering into the lives of the young people, in addition to their part in the business of the Store proper, distinctly raise the personal standard of morals, ethics, mental ability and physical strength, and give to the men and women who are filling and shall fill higher positions, a broader outlook.

When increasing duties made it impossible for him to give personal attention and interest to every case calling for need of redress or adjustment of difficulties, Arthur Letts took great care that justice was done by those to whom he delegated authority. Immediately prior to the completion of the south half of the new building he addressed the following communication to his employees:

June 27th, 1914.

Mr. W. W. Penry, President,
Arthur Letts' Employees Association,
The Broadway Department Store

Dear Mr. Penry:

Now that we are about to move into our new building where it will be necessary to engage many more employees, it may be impossible for me to keep in as close touch with them, as I have endeavored to do in the past. I have been thinking over a plan for many months that would enable me to keep in personal touch with all their needs and their welfare and have come to the conclusion that I would like to have you elect a Committee of, say, five or whatever number you may think best, selected by your co-workers from among yourselves, who will be your mouth-piece and representative. I shall look upon this Committee as speaking for all of the employees.

There may be times when your superiors are hard and you may have a just grievance. I know there are men in responsible positions who do not always have a kindly feeling toward you, and may at times take advantage of their positions, and I believe that such a committee as I have in mind would be a safe-guard to all of my employees, and would be a forward movement, representing you in all matters concerning your welfare during business hours.

If you have any suggestions that will tend toward making your duties more pleasant, or if you hear of any complaint among the employees, it will be the duty of this Committee to investigate. I want everyone to receive absolute justice. This committee can reach my office at any time.

I want my employees to feel that their interest is my interest. I want to know that their surroundings are pleasant and that they like their work. I can assure you that this Committee will be protected in any report that it makes to my office, or the office of the management, and that nobody's position will be jeopardized.

I want you all to feel that this business is your business, that you

The Broadway Choral Society

At Philharmonic Auditorium, March 2, 1923

Below—At University of Southern California, April 16, 1926

Broadway Department Store

CONCERTS GIVEN BY THE BROADWAY CHORAL SOCIETY
ALWAYS DRAW PACKED HOUSES

"Broadway" day at the Red Cross "Garden Fair"

Broadway Employees in a "Preparedness" parade are not only well taken care of and well paid, but that when you leave my services, you can look back upon your experience here as a pleasant one.

Yours very truly,
Arthur Letts.

Arthur Letts' treatment of his employees has always been one of the greatest monuments to his memory. Thousands of men and women who have worked for him have regarded him as their benefactor.

Under the circumstances, it is small wonder that when in 1917, our country was dragged into the World War, these employees so enthusiastically followed the example of their Chief in giving unstintingly of their time and money for patriotic purposes. When the local chapter of the Red Cross Society invited the employees of the larger stores to take charge of their bazaar on Saturday afternoons during July and August, it was The Broadway employees that were selected first, for it was felt they would set a standard that would be difficult of attainment by those who followed them.

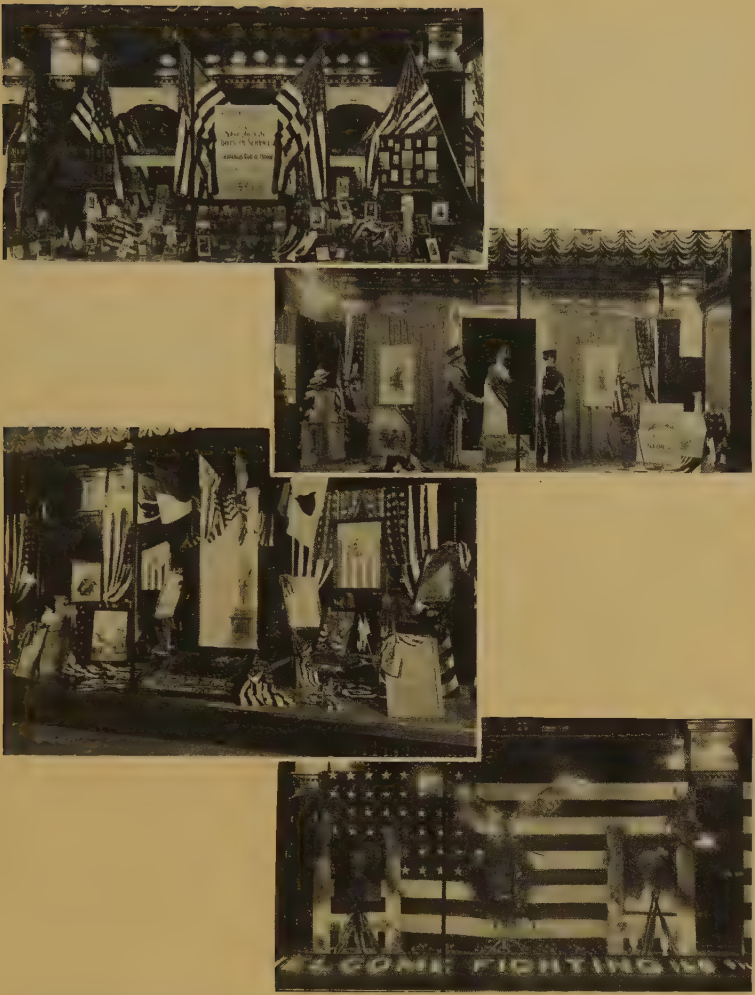
"Garden Fair" was on every lip on that first Saturday afternoon in July, 1918. The thoroughfares leading toward the Red Cross Shop were thronged with motor cars, the street cars were crowded, and the grounds at the Red Cross Shop, spacious though they were, seemed to have suddenly grown too small. There was not a dull moment during the entire afternoon and evening; in fact, it was by far the biggest day in the history of the Red Cross Shop. The merchandise, of course, was all contributed, and a great many of the Store people brought things they had made or purchased to be sold to help the work of the Red Cross. As a result of the afternoon's effort of these young people, a net profit of $6,100.00 was turned over to the Red Cross.

From the beginning to the end of the war these Broadway employees carried out a most impressive flag service every day, in honor of the boys who had gone to the front. At the opening of the doors in the morning, a bugle sounded from the Mezzanine Floor, after which a large silken flag in the center of the Store was raised with due dignity, this being followed by the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." At high noon, the bugle call sounded again, The Broadway choir sang an anthem, after which customers and employees joined in singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." At closing time all stood reverently at salute as the large silken flag was slowly lowered to the accompaniment of "Taps," sounded on a silver bugle. This flag service became so well known over the country that it was talked of from Coast to Coast, and drew a letter of congratulation from Adjutant General R. A. Hill of Washington, D. C., addressed to the employees and expressing appreciation of the patriotic interest they were displaying.

During the Liberty Loan campaigns, a total of $354,250.00 was subscribed by The Broadway employees, to which amount Arthur Letts added $250,000.00, making a grand total of $604,250.00—the best showing of any store in the city. More than two-thirds of all the employees subscribed to all of the loans.

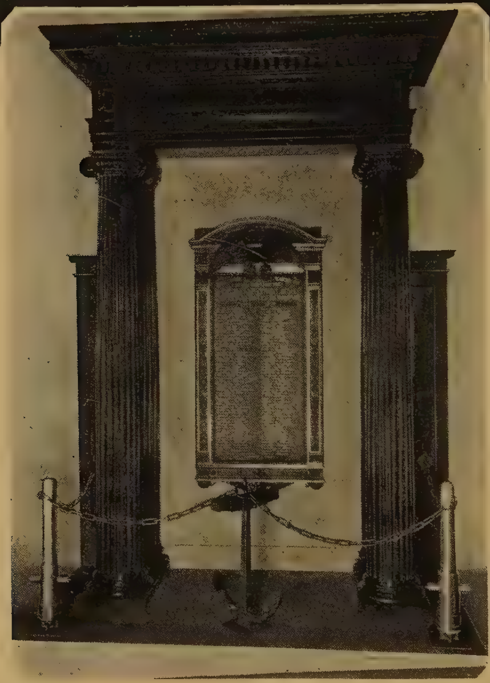
A branch of the Red Cross, known as the A. L. E. A. branch, was formed in 1916, splendid work being done by its devoted members. Three of these workers won the coveted Red Cross Service Badges, given only to those who had spent eight hundred hours in making comforts for the soldiers.

In January, 1918, a branch of the War Savings Society was formed, systematic plans being made to insure as large a membership as possible. Each floor had its corps of workers, and so successful were the efforts made that the society


COME FIGHTING

PATRIOTISM WAS THE KEYNOTE OF THE BROADWAY'S WINDOWS DURING THE WAR

Arthur Letts receiving a presentation from a group of his employees



Bronze Memorial Erected by Arthur Letts, to commemorate the names of those employees who served in the World War started with 1203 members. When the amount paid in to this society was totaled up on August 31, 1919, it was found that $61,724.67 had been subscribed—no mean amount, surely!

When the boys were away at the front or in training camps, Arthur Letts saw to it that boxes containing "goodies," cigarettes, and such things as they would have good use for, were sent to each man; and when the war was over, he ordered that the names of the 103 employees of The Broadway Department Store—his own son amongst them—who faithfully served the cause of Freedom in the ranks of America's Liberty Army, should be commemorated in lasting bronze.

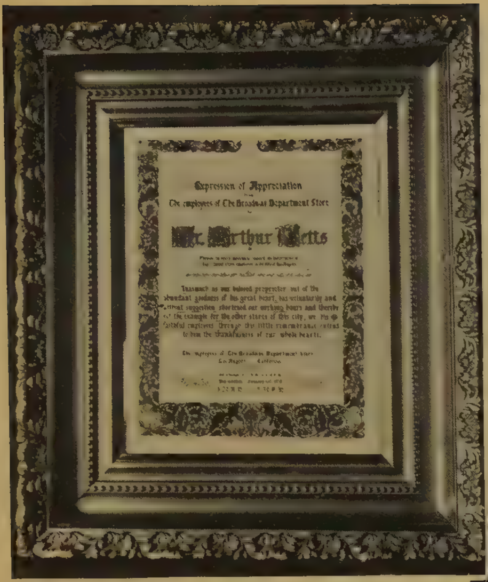
On the very day when the great soldier, Albert, King of the Belgians, was being honored just outside the city as a living example of justice and democracy, within The Broadway Department Store, in the presence of a large throng, the beautiful memorial tablet was unveiled by the Mayor of the City, who himself had given his own son to die in that awful struggle. Said Arthur Letts: "As long as this building remains, that memorial remains. Every boy who left his position here, except the one who made the supreme sacrifice, found his position waiting for him when he returned."

Following the ceremonies of the unveiling of the tablet a banquet was served, at which each of the returned men was presented with a $100.00 Liberty Bond. Led by The Broadway chorus, the happy guests sang song after song, but not before every head in the joyous throng was bowed in silence as a tribute of respect to the memory of "the boy who went West," Sorsby K. McGowen.

Another subject that was close to Arthur Letts' heart was the question of sharing the profits of the business with his employees. It takes time, and costs money, to employ new people who, while "green," are inefficient, slow, and an actual retardant to the business. No sane employer ever discharges a competent employee as long as his business is prosperous, because he realizes that competent workers are the very pillars of industry. Numerous profit-sharing plans of different kinds are now in effect in different institutions, and widespread adoption is in sight. Most of these plans have been many years in the making, and are still in the experimental stage. What Arthur Letts wanted was trained and true people, interested and devoted; people full of enthusiasm; and he endeavored to obtain these results by holding out rewards over and above the regular salary or wage in order to stimulate his workers to the exercise of every capacity and energy they possessed.

As an example of the esteem in which The Broadway Store organization is regarded, it might be mentioned that it has been selected by the students of the vocational classes of eight different high schools of Los Angeles as the scene of their annual day set apart in which to gain practical experience. On "High School Day," some 250 of the students take their places alongside the regular employees. They plan and write the advertisements carrying the message of the merchandise on sale on this day; are punctual, polite, pleasant to the customers; and enjoy every minute of the day as employees of the large store. They are received royally and treated kindly by the older and regular employees, and go through their first experience in a big retail selling establishment without the least bit of fear and trembling. They have proven that they can work under a system and subject themselves to rules and regulations, and do the work they are called upon to perform. When they see how smoothly things run, and note the absence of fric-

SOME PRESENTATIONS MADE TO ARTHUR LETTS BY HIS EMPLOYEES

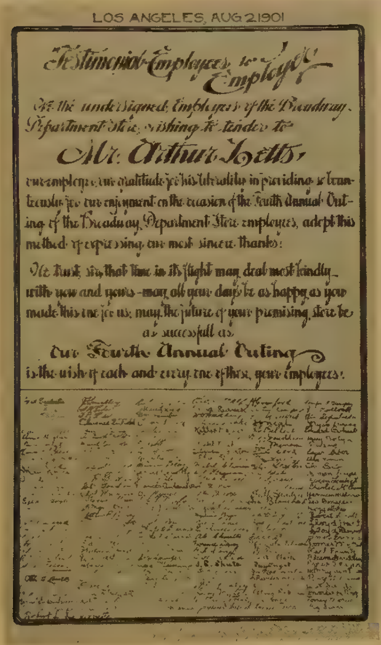


Expression of Appreciation
from
The employees of The Broadway Department Store
to
Mr. Arthur Letts

Inasmuch as our beloved proprietor, out of the abundant goodness of his great heart, has voluntarily and without suggestion shortened our working hours and thereby set the example for the other stores of this city, we, his faithful employees, through this little remembrance extend to him the thankfulness of our whole hearts.

The employees of The Broadway Department Store
Los Angeles, California

An Illuminated Address



LOS ANGELES, AUG 2 1901

Testimonial Employees to Employer

We the undersigned, Employees of the Broadway Department Store, wishing to tender to

Mr. Arthur Letts,

our employer, our gratitude for his liberality in providing so bountifully for our enjoyment on the occasion of the Fourth Annual Outing of the Broadway Department Store employees, adopt this method of expressing our most sincere thanks:

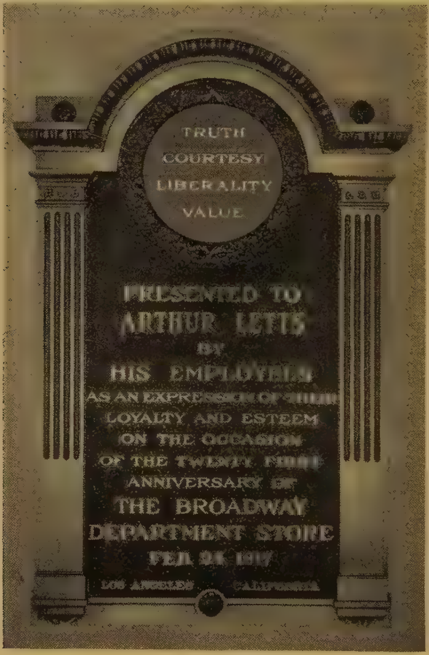
We trust, sir, that time in its flight may deal most kindly with you and yours—may all your days be as happy as you made this one for us; may the future of your promising store be as successfull as

Our Fourth Annual Outing

is the wish of each and every one of those, your employees.

Silver Plaque to commemorate an Employer's generosity -

Left—Thanks for a Happy Outing.


TRUTH
COURTESY
LIBERALITY
VALUE
PRESENTED TO
ARTHUR LETTS
BY
HIS EMPLOYEES
AS AN EXPRESSION OF THEIR
LOYALTY AND ESTEEM
ON THE OCCASION
OF THE TWENTY FIRST
ANNIVERSARY OF
THE BROADWAY
DEPARTMENT STORE
FEB. 24, 1917
LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA

Sterling silver model of The Broadway Department Store

Bronze Tablet erected to Mr. Letts by his employees, on the store's twenty-first anniversary tion, it gives them a new angle on the meaning of organization.

The solicitude shown by Arthur Letts to his employees won him countless friends among their number and, naturally, they seldom missed an opportunity to express their appreciation in some tangible manner. He was perhaps the most "banqueted" man in the city, and during some years there would be several occasions when his managers or employees would give a banquet for him. They presented him with various testimonials to be kept as reminders of the fact that they regarded him as the pioneer in every store-reform favoring employees. They realized that the strain of the struggling years had been a tremendous care upon him, yet through none of his labors had he ever forgotten them. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the business, they presented him with an exquisite miniature of The Broadway Department Store building, reproduced to exact scale in sterling silver. This model contained 620 ounces of pure silver; one hundred and fifty-two windows were constructed in perfect detail, also thirty-two fire escapes and their accompanying ladders, with all the water tanks, ventilators and sundry structures upon the roof, together with the pergolas, statuary, and fountain of the roof garden; to say nothing of thirty-three thousand bricks engraved upon the outer walls; the whole so constructed that it could be illuminated from within.

It is apparent from what has been written that Arthur Letts' concern for the welfare of his employees was not superficial; he was deeply interested in the lives, the joys and the sorrows of his people. He had a clear, logical mind, but he also had a great heart, a tender sympathy and intensely emotional nature, though these qualities were sometimes obscured by a brusque manner.

When this great man passed away, he did not forget the men and women workers in his mercantile enterprises, which were the springs from which his riches flowed. He willed that a part of his estate should be held in trust, to be known as the "Arthur Letts' Foundation," the purpose of which will be to care not only for sick and needy employees of Bullock's and The Broadway Department Store, but all who have ever been so employed and have become necessitous.

The practical appreciation thus thoughtfully provided is worthy of the employer who conceived it, and of the employees who became its beneficiaries. This Foundation will stand as an example pointing the way to others who have made conspicuous business successes.

The world is beginning to recognize the truth of the lines written by an English poet on the death of one who had amassed a fortune:

> "*And all that he held in his cold, dead hands*
> *Was what he had given away.*"

That is all any of us will hold after the pallid Messenger appears before the portals to reclaim the talent intrusted to us when life began. Men and women are remembered by what they have given to the world, not by what they have been able to grasp and call their own.

It is actions such as these that stand to the credit of Arthur Letts that help to perpetuate that intangible something which great men leave behind them, and impel their fellows to say: "He was a great man."

The memory of this man will live as long as The Broadway stands. On the seventeenth day of June there is now held, every year, a most impressive service before the doors are opened for business. The day is known as "Arthur Letts' Day," for it is the birthday anniversary of this man who did so much to make his employees happy in their work.

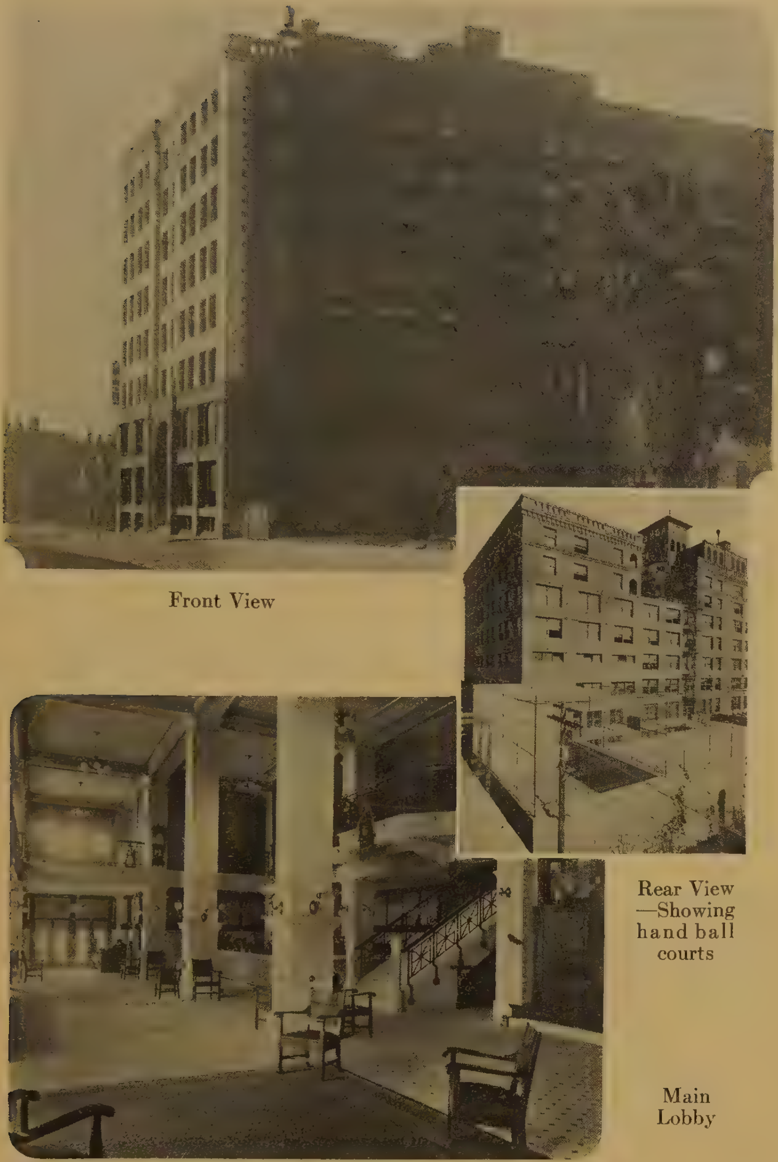
All day long there is music playing, the store is banked with flowers, and everyone within the building wears a white carnation in memory of the Chief who himself was so fond of flowers. A large portrait of Arthur Letts is reverently placed in one of the large display windows, that all who pass may see. The only wording permitted near this portrait is: "Arthur Letts—Born June 17th—1862." That is all—for Arthur Letts is not dead; his spirit lives forever in the hearts of his workers, his "boys and girls" as he lovingly used to call them.

The great heart of Arthur Letts, with its sympathetic understanding of the other fellow's needs, was by no means centered solely on the welfare of his employees. In all civic, philanthropic and charitable enterprises he took a leading part, giving generously of his time, his energies, his advice and his wealth. This man knew well the truth that the greatest joy and satisfaction that can come into one's life is in service for others, and no citizen could have shown more zealous or helpful interest in the promotion or carrying on of enterprises tending to advance the material and civic welfare of Los Angeles. He not only gave his checks on behalf of a worthy cause, but with his checks he gave himself—something that few men do.

Standing out among his earlier activities was the great interest he took in the Young Men's Christian Association. He looked upon the Y. M. C. A. as an unconscious protest against the failure of the churches to retain their religious and moral hold upon the young people. The youth, in the changing conditions of life in America, were becoming more independent of parental control and were wandering away from the monotony and dryness of the pulpit and fleeing from the catechisms and ritualistic forms of the Sabbath classes. They were rushing out, under the sense of a new liberty, into desecrating extremes, like young colts suddenly released from winter quarters. To catch and hold them to reason and honest toil required kindness, patience, and attractive methods of instruction.

It was in 1905 that Arthur Letts accepted the presidency of the Young Men's Christian Association. For some years the Y. M. C. A. in Los Angeles had been moribund; but in 1905, the directorate was reorganized. Frederick H. Rindge was made president, Arthur Letts, vice-president, and a capable board of directors elected to serve with them. Mr. Rindge died before action was well under way, and Mr. Letts was induced to take his place. In the meantime he had persuaded that capable man, D. E. Luther, to transfer his activities from Atlanta, Georgia, and become General Secretary of the Y. M. C. A. in Los Angeles. He also insisted that a new building should be erected on the Association's present down-town location, a site he had been instrumental in securing, although then considered by many to be "out in the country." There was talk of taking small subscriptions to start the organization on its way. Mr. Letts asked for the subscription list, and wrote, "Arthur Letts, $25,000.00," remarking that he was going to invest that sum in American boyhood—the boyhood that in twenty years would be the manhood of America. There was no more talk about meager subscriptions. The pace set was followed by others, and the year 1908 saw the completion of the present fine building, which for several years had the largest membership of any single Association organization in the world.

During the nine years of his presidency Arthur Letts gave liberally of time, work, and money, and it was often his absolute refusal to give up or be discouraged that carried the work over critical periods. The affairs of the Y. M. C. A.



Front View

Rear View
—Showing
hand ball
courts

Main
Lobby

THE RESULT OF ARTHUR LETTS' EFFORTS
THE NEW Y. M. C. A. BUILDING, 1908

A WELL-EQUIPPED BUILDING

Automobile School

Machine Shop

Chemistry

Metal Furnace

Electrical Research

Gymnasium

invariably took precedence over personal pleasures, as witness the following letter, written early in 1906:

> "Answering your kind invitation to accompany the officials of the Company on the trip to Mexico, I reluctantly deny myself this pleasure.
>
> "Few people can realize what this means to me. For the past five years I have been endeavoring to make this trip. The land of the Montezumas has always had a great attraction for me. I have read considerable of the past history of this Country, and it has appealed to me strongly. Laying aside the business interests I have down there, I assure you it would have been of inestimable value to me to have visited Mexico City. And the mining properties that I have there—when, could I have laid the matter before the officials of Mexico City, I feel that it would have been a great saving of money.
>
> "Possibly you may realize the amount of pleasure I had anticipated in taking this trip with yourself and the number of friends who are going, but duty must first be thought of, and I feel earnestly the duty that has devolved upon me regarding the work of the Y. M. C. A. It seems to me if I leave at the present time it would be running away from the enemy, or desertion, so I have decided to stay and fight the battle, and give every spare moment of my time to closing the canvass for this building.
>
> "We each one have to see things in our own particular way, so I trust you will pardon me if I have caused you any annoyance by not accompanying you on this trip. Wishing you and all the friends the happiest trip of your lives, rest assured I shall think of you many times and with longing desire during your three weeks of pleasure."

It was in the midst of this campaign for the new Y. M. C. A. building that word came telling of the great catastrophe that had befallen San Francisco. Arthur Letts immediately stopped his work for the building, took a hasty collection, gathered $1500, and left with it in his pocket by the next train.

Among the first men he met on the scene of desolation was Secretary McCoy of the San Francisco institution. Mr. McCoy was dazed and half-crazed.

"Oh! Mr. Letts!" he said, "twenty-five years of life are thrown away; it is all at an end."

Now, Arthur Letts had no idea, when he met the man, of what he would say, but on the moment he replied: "Nonsense, McCoy! Take this money, buy some clothes and a ticket to New York, and go at once and see John D. Rockefeller and ask him for a check for $250,000.00; and get the rest of a half-million from the others; and come back and build a new place." McCoy was game; he came-to, woke up from his trance of misery, and went. Mr. Rockefeller came through with his little check for $250,000.00; the rest was easy, and San Francisco soon had its magnificent Y. M. C. A. in course of construction.

During those dark days Arthur Letts worked untiringly in his efforts to cheer up the sufferers. In answer to a call for help he made a midnight trip to San Jose and the State Hospital at St. Agnews, traveling in the red glow of the burning city that illuminated the country for miles. With his characteristic hopefulness and cheerfulness, and his wise suggestions, his coming was as sunshine after the storm.

Most people admire and are affected by positive natures, whether good or bad, and when a strong personality like Arthur Letts occupies a position where he has direct influence over the lives of great numbers of his fellow-men and women he must, consciously or otherwise, exert a tremendous power for good or for evil. In the case of Mr. Letts this influence was all for good, and though his words were few his actions spoke and still speak for him.

In 1909, he went as a delegate to the World's Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations, held at Barmen-Elberfeld, in Germany, and was an influential factor in that great assemblage. However, it was one convention he did not greatly enthuse over. The fact that all the speeches had to be translated simultaneously into English, French and German made the proceedings too tedious for a man of his temperament.

He served for a number of years on the International Committee of the Association, and attended the International Conventions at Toronto in 1910, and at Cincinnati in 1913. During his presidency of the Y. M. C. A. it was his habit to extend a cordial invitation to all young men away from home on Christmas Day to be his guests. Five hundred or more would avail themselves of the opportunity to enjoy not simply a turkey dinner, but a spirit of comradeship and at-homeness approaching as nearly as possible that which they would have shared about the old hearthstone "back East." There were no speeches—no formality of any sort. Every one was there to become acquainted with some other unfortunate, alone like himself, and, to judge from appearances, many of them were more than successful, and Christmas passed from a day of solemn quiet, and even gloom, to one of brightness and good cheer.

This was merely one of Arthur Letts' numerous Yuletide gifts to those less fortunate than himself.

When, in the course of time, this man was called to the Great Beyond, there was spread upon the records of the Young Men's Christian Association a most glowing tribute concluding with the following paragraph:

> "To the Young Men's Christian Association his loss is most keenly felt. Always a loyal supporter, for years he was its president, successfully guiding its course in the work to which it is committed, giving without stint from his resources of heart, mind and money. He gave unsparingly of his superb abilities for the benefit and profit of the work.
>
> "Bowing submissively, we bid farewell to the earthly career of this wonderful man whose loss we mourn."

What Arthur Letts did for the Y. M. C. A., he also did for the Boy Scouts. From the day he extended his hand to the guidance of that institution and opened his purse to its support, it has been a potent power for good in the community. He was its first President, and in 1917 was made one of the Vice-Presidents of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

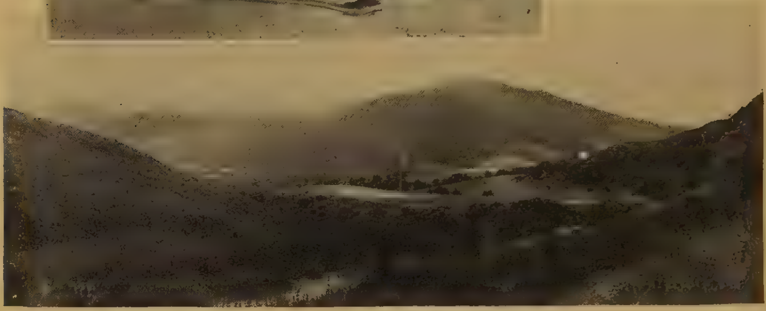
With his heart and soul Arthur Letts was in the Boy Scout movement because it was constructive. Any boy at least twelve years of age has always been eligible for membership if he promises to conform to its rules and regulations, keep its oath, and to prepare for simple tests on the composition and history of the American flag and customary forms of respect due it. Upon a boy being accepted he is assigned to some certain Troop under the leadership of a Scout Master. These Scout Masters are selected with infinite care so as to make certain of their sterling character and mature judgment. The Boy Scout movement knows no creed or nationality. It draws no social line. It is moral in its tone without being religious in its methods.

Nothing is more lamentable than the utter unfamiliarity of the average boy—and of the grown-up man for that matter—with the geography, topography, peculiarities and distinctions of the country surrounding his home town, as well as with the municipal activities and governmental machinery of his city. The Boy Scouts are not only brought in touch with the country but are taught to observe and to use those observations to their advantage and to the benefit of others. They become Nature-students of the right kind. As to their city, they are instructed and given demonstrations as to how things are done—and, what is more—they are shown the worthiness of helping in the enforcement of those laws which have to do with the healthfulness, traffic-safety and beauty of the city in which they live.

Upper left—Rescuing people from the wharves. *Upper right*—A midnight ride to San Jose—Arthur Letts in rear seat. *Center*—San Francisco burning. *Lower left*—A frantic search for injured. *Lower right*—The State Hospital at St. Agnews

DARK DAYS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO FIRE

Arthur Letts, accompanied by General Sherman, presenting new colors to the Boy Scouts



Camp Arthur Letts—the week-end camp site in the Hollywood Hills, presented to the Boy Scouts. *Below*—The Los Angeles Boy Scouts' Band—has the highest rating of any Boy Scouts' band in the United States

THE BOY SCOUTS

The injunction to "do a good turn daily," taken in connection with the significant slogan, "Be prepared," has done much to differentiate the Boy Scout Movement from other laudable movements of a national and international nature. Charity is one of the key-notes of a true Boy Scout's life. He tries to do good, not only for the pleasure he gives others but the pleasure he derives. Whatever he does is done without hope of reward. He endeavors to radiate cheerfulness and friendliness.

A healthy body, a healthy mind and healthy moral concepts constitute a truly excellent standard of citizenship, not the least of these being a healthy body. To get into the great outdoors, to breathe the fresh air, to bask in the life-giving sunshine, to learn to love Nature as well as to know her in all of her moods and manifestations—these are objects of the Boy Scout work. What appeals more to the average boy than a stay in camp—to sleep in a tent—and what better can bring the pink of health to his cheeks?

In order that the Boy Scouts of Los Angeles should have an opportunity to get the most out of camp life, Arthur Letts presented them with a ten-acre camp site located in Miller Canyon, nestled between two miniature valleys up near the highest point between Laurel and Cahuenga Canyons, north of Hollywood. It is one of the few camps in America that maintains an open camp the year round, and hundreds of boys take advantage of the opportunity to make their weekly pilgrimage to the camp and spend a few days in the big outdoors. After reaching camp they make all haste to get into a bathing suit and with a whoop of joy take a dive into the swimming-pool. It is a great sight to see the full camp line up for inspection before the mess call is sounded.

In addition to this camp site, Arthur Letts provided money to build a club house; and in order that the boys might have a suitable band to lead their parades, he took it upon himself to furnish all the instruments. This band now consists of sixty pieces, and has the highest rating of any Boy Scouts' band in the United States. It never fails to bring applause as it marches through the streets.

Needless to say, Mr. Letts was held in great esteem by the boys. On one occasion they marched in a body to his home, serenaded him with music and songs, and presented him with a handsome silver loving cup "in appreciation of his countless good turns to the boys of our city." Any good man loves honor. He can't help it; and perhaps it was the honors he received that inspired this man to do so much for others. Today, the Los Angeles Boy Scouts have more than six thousand members enrolled in their organization.

During the World War, Arthur Letts stood out as a heroic figure—not as one at the battle front: his years did not permit of that—but as one who seemed verily the embodiment of patriotism, a general who could be relied upon to carry out any undertaking assigned to him. His home became the rendezvous of many distinguished war visitors, prominent among them being General Sir William White, Colonel Alexander Edward Murray, V. C., the Earl of Dunmore, Sir Thomas White, the Canadian Minister of Finance; and, later, Sir Auckland Geddes, the British Ambassador to the United States.

The war, in its multiplicity of phases, roused him to tremendous activity. Money, time, his business organization, and his influence in other associations were all given generously. He thought the Allies were right and Germany was wrong, and he wanted the United States in the war long before we entered. He said that if German militarism had to be suppressed for the safety of the world, the task had best be taken on quickly. He hated war with all the intensity of his nature, but he thought that this war might end war. On the first night of the first Red Cross Fund drive, he gave $25,000.00 and when the Liberty bond drives came it was the same story; he helped organize the drives. He bought bonds "until it hurt," and then kept right on buying them.

Applying to war work the same far view which he had utilized in his numerous business activities, he urged the relief organizations outside of the Red Cross to unite in preparing for that time when American soldiers, wounded and disabled, should have need of help and of training, and when their families would need care. "I would keep all money raised by such organizations, right here for our future needs," said he earnestly. "We must face the fact that the time will come when those boys will be our charges, here in our own country which is their home, and to which we must be prepared to welcome them and to offer to them the comfort and succor which they are sure to need. Let us take the far view in this," he said, "and begin now—without neglect of the Red Cross, or of any other demands—to get ready for that time! Let it never be said that we were unappreciative of, unthoughtful for the comfort of, those who have gone forth and have offered their lives in such a worthy cause."

When asked to take the presidency of several foreign war organizations, he replied that he would do so, only in case that all would unite, under an American title. "I have no patience," he said, "with that Americanism prefixed with the name of some other country. We are not British-Americans, Irish-Americans, Swedish-Americans, or anything but pure Americans. Whatever the aims of our organizations, they should be, first of all, for our country." This, by reason of the fact that Arthur Letts was born in England, was strong talk.

In those bleak days when Belgium and France were overrun by the invading host, and were fainting in the shadow of famine, he was made chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Relief Committee, and was given the responsibility of sending a cargo of food to France in the first steel ship built at Los Angeles harbor.

Big-hearted women and men volunteered their services, and more than one hundred thousand persons contributed to the cargo, with the result that all of the great space allotted in the ship was filled to capacity, and a great quantity left over to go on another boat.

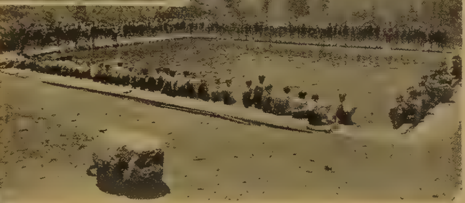
For several years, during the dark period of the war, Arthur Letts maintained some sixty French orphans at his own expense. It was General Pau who ordered that the medal of the Societe Francaise de Secours Aux Blesses Militaires be awarded to him in recognition of his admirable attitude toward the Allies and for his substantial support of the various relief measures for France.

When Marshal Foch visited Los Angeles on his triumphant tour, Mr. Letts heard of the great interest the Marshal took in the so-called Sunshine houses that were being provided for the tubercular orphans of the dead soldiers of France. He enquired the cost of the annual up-keep of such a home, purchased a bank draft on Paris for a like amount, and at one of the functions quietly placed the draft in the hands of the Marshal—"for the establishment of the Maison Claire du Marechal Foch." For a moment Marshal Foch stood speechless. "I do not know what to say to you, Mr. Letts," he finally said. "You have taken me completely by surprise. Words fail me. When I recover

Bridging the gap between knowing and doing

Leisure Hours

Below—The assembly at the swimming pool



Breakfast in the open

Below—The Scout-master tells his story

LIFE AT THE BOY SCOUTS' MOUNTAIN CAMP

CAMP ACTIVITIES

Sunday morning in Camp

A lesson in Botany

Visiting celebrities must
face the camera

A camp-fire ceremonial

myself I will write you a letter and express my thanks." Commenting on this gift as he journeyed to Pasadena, Marshal Foch said: "I have received almost everything imaginable on this tour, but this is the first gift that will assist one of the interests of my heart. All the rest have been personal."

No man in Los Angeles was more active and more effective in his activity than was Arthur Letts. He never exploited himself or his store in connection with war work. He used both his influence and affluence to help the Allies to win, and every act rang sincere. Moreover, he continued his activity after the war, when thousands of others heaved a sigh of relief and relinquished their grip upon war problems. No patriotic organization appealed to him in vain. He was a warm, practical friend of every man, and the dependents of every man, who served through that great conflict.

Just how big the heart of Arthur Letts really was, will never be known. Hitherto-unknown instances of his benevolence are constantly coming to light. If people were in trouble, their first thought was to write to Arthur Letts. His correspondence files reveal numerous instances of mothers begging him to try and locate ungrateful sons, at which he was invariably successful; and when he urged a young man to get in touch with his parents he seldom failed to point out the duty the erring one owed of at least writing to those who had cared for him in his younger years.

Here also are records of unfortunate people whose expenses he paid back to their old homes, in order that their last desire might be gratified. Very pathetic were some of these cases. Inmates of State institutions for the feebleminded would write him most heart-breaking letters, pleading with him to use his influence to get them out into a world of freedom. Prisoners in the State penitentiaries promised to tread the narrow path forever after if he would secure their release on parole. A few did, but the majority did not, and there came a day when Arthur Letts reluctantly refused to accept responsibility for any more paroles. Hundreds of people were helped over hard places. Maybe it was only a ten-dollar note; perhaps a basket of provisions or a parcel of warm clothing; or it may have been a large quantity of food sent to the poorer families on the East Side, or a truck load of toys to the Children's Hospital. In any event, it was always the outcome of a kindly sympathy and a warm, generous heart.

In 1912, as the representative of the California State Board of the American Red Cross Association, at the request of President Taft he did much to assist in raising funds for the relief of an appalling condition in which thousands of men, women and children were dying of starvation in China. The McKinley Home for Boys was an institution to which he devoted a considerable amount of time, and the Salvation Army was another organization to which he was much attached.

For years he was one of the principal supports of that great-souled, tender-hearted preacher of Temperance—Francis Murphy. No man can measure the good that was wrought in this world by that eloquent apostle of right living, who gave almost forty years of his life to the cause of Temperance, who addressed more than twenty-five thousand gatherings and caused more than a million people to sign the temperance pledge. His method was not one of coercion by means of legislation or penalty, but by persuasion and the power of love. This one man did more to reclaim men from drunkenness and its dire results than all the organizations that sought to stifle the craving for strong drink by penal enactments and political movements.

Often did Francis Murphy tell his friends that his visits with Arthur Letts were a source of great inspiration to him. It was his habit to frequently drop in for a word of greeting, and if Mr. Letts were absent he would never think of leaving without writing some appreciative note. In Arthur Letts' library was an album in which these little notes were carefully preserved, also many of the letters he received from Francis Murphy. Beautiful letters they were too. As an example:

Philadelphia,
Sept. 29, 1906

My dearest Friend:

Your delightful letter is received, and read again and again with increased pleasure. Your letters are a great blessing to me. You help me, strengthen me, give me courage to press on in His service—loving one another, helping one another. You have a kind word and a kind deed for publicans and sinners, so did our blessed Master. The multitude of kind deeds which you have performed have become ministering angels not simply in California but everywhere; where distress, sorrow and want lives your generous, loving heart has come to comfort and to heal.

I think of you every day and will be so glad soon to see you face to face and receive your benediction. I think of that beautiful home you are building, and of the Eden of beauty you are surrounding it with. It is the most charming picture that I have on the page of my memory's book.

The birds come to your window and sing songs, live with you, the flowers bloom where you are, the children look up and smile. Thank God for such a happy spirit and such a splendid life, and that God is abundantly rewarding you in blessing all your interests.

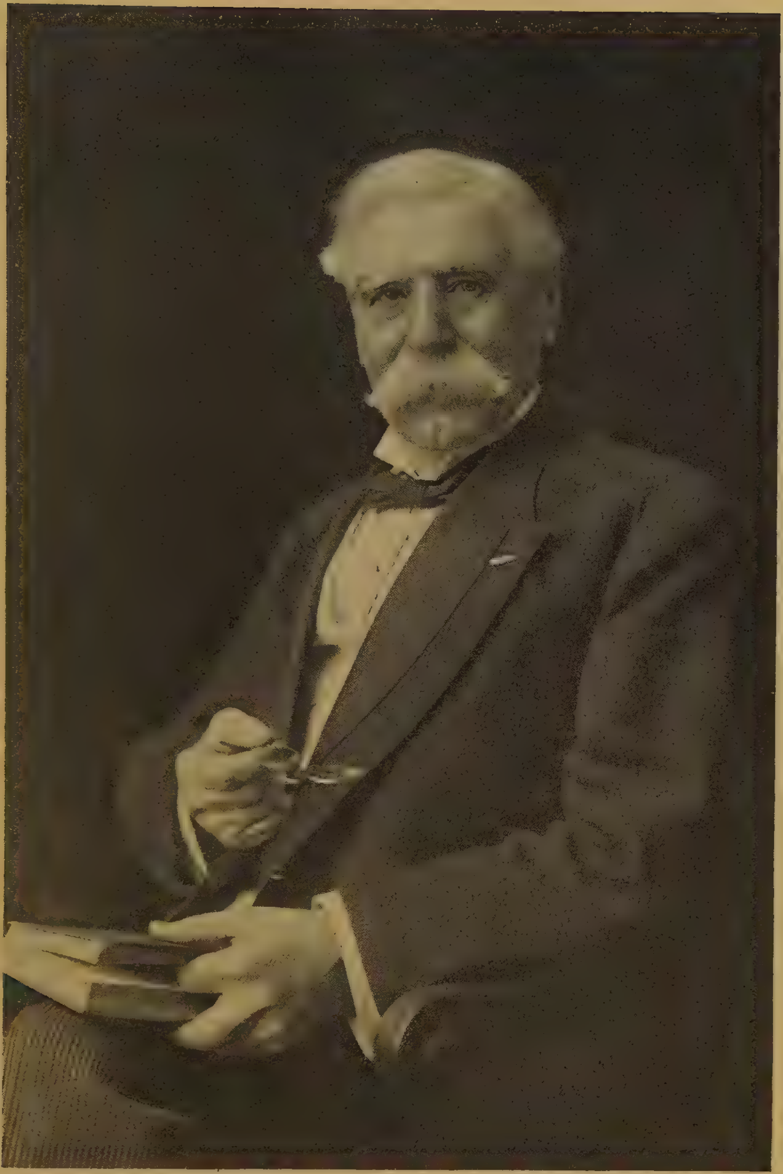
I am waiting for the miracle that the Autumn will bring to us in the Allegheny mountains. The trees have begun to take on beauty, and in a few days this whole land will be an ocean of splendor. I told you the birds had gone, and I miss them. They made the air vocal with their music, but they have gone to the sunny south land, and I will soon follow.

My children join with me in loving regard to you and yours. God be with you.

Yours in heart,
FRANCIS MURPHY.

Strange as it may seem, it was by no means unusual for ministers to write to Arthur Letts asking him to suggest topics upon which they could preach sermons that would be of practical use for the betterment of the community. Friends and acquaintances not connected with his business easily found access to him at almost any hour of the day. Struggling and weak churches of all creeds and sects went to him for money and advice. Authors brought the proofs of books, inventors came to exhibit before him some improvement, some new toy, or some mechanical device, and scientists would urge his support of expeditions to far-away lands in search of the unknown. Always he heard their appeals for help patiently, even though in many cases he could do nothing but listen. He seemed never too busy to advise and consult with those who were worried about their affairs, no matter how humble the person might be; and he would frequently give an hour or more to discuss someone's problem with him, in spite of the fact that others were waiting and business matters pressing. He also took the time to write with his own hand many, many letters, which he felt carried to the recipient more of his personal feeling than a typewritten letter.

One of the greatest achievements of Arthur Letts was the great service he rendered humanity in working for the passage of the Anti-Racetrack Gambling Bill by the California legislature. This was in 1909. California had become the asylum of the racetrack riff-raff driven out of other states. Rarely a day but what some young man was arrested for embezzlement, the result of "playing the races."



FRANCIS MURPHY

ARTHUR LETTS AT HIS DESK DURING THE WAR

Business men admitted the ruinous effect of the racetrack gambling—the murders and the holdups; bright young men stealing from their employers in order to gamble at the races, women demoralized, and little children suffering—but most of them feared to come out and take a stand. Then one day Arthur Letts invited fifty representative business and professional men of the city to an informal luncheon, and told them he had called them together for the purpose of taking the initiative to stop the racetrack gambling. "This gambling," he said, "is demoralizing our people, and it is time it was stopped." An organization was formed, known as the Business Men's Anti-Racetrack Gambling League of Southern California, and Arthur Letts was elected to be its president.

The league took in members from all counties of Southern California, and was in no sense a political organization. The attitude which these men took in their determined campaign was solely directed against racetrack gambling. They believed that the conditions were such that it was a decided menace to their business. They did not, however, ignore the moral side, and statistics of an astounding number of convictions brought about through gambling were a powerful argument in their favor.

The real fireworks began when the Anti-Racetrack Gambling Bill was introduced in the Legislature, for more than one Senator had direct financial interests in the tracks. A big fight ensued, the accounts of which occupied much front-page space in the press. Arthur Letts virtually put aside his great business interests to work for the passage of the measure, and spent most of his time at the State Capitol. Unsuccessful in endeavoring to persuade the Governor to send a special message to the Legislature, he made a careful canvass of the Senators and Assemblymen, and wherever he met with hostility, or even doubt, made it a point to write to their constituents, asking them to please enlighten their representative at Sacramento. As many as sixty such personal letters were written in a single day.

Speaking before the members of the City Club after the battle was over and the victory won, Mr. Letts said: "Frankly, gentlemen, I want no credit for this victory over race-track gambling. I felt it my duty to make this fight for the sake of our young men, and, incidentally, for the good of the State. It was the cause of the young men that weighed heavily upon me."

No other man could have accomplished what he did, for his motive was unquestionable, and his methods of appeal were wise. Throughout the campaign he was bombarded with letters and messages that "frothed at the mouth and spat venom." They varied from ribald jest to "Black Hand" threats to life and property, but he paid them scant attention. Over his desk hung the motto: "*Non Sibi Deesse*"—Never Be Wanting to Oneself. That was the philosophy of his life.

Those who were privileged to count Arthur Letts their friend were blessed. In his quiet, unostentatious, yet practical manner, this sometimes much-maligned, often-misunderstood man gave annually of his income to the extent of many thousands of dollars. His busy brain was constantly evolving schemes for helping others and bringing happiness into lives less fortunate than his own. He once stated that to help people who would not help themselves only did them an injury, but to help those who made good use of the assistance gave the benefactor a great pleasure in after life as he viewed the success attending the efforts of those he had helped because they had really tried.

When he arrived at the store in the morning he frequently brought with him a big armful of flowers from his gardens, a few to be placed on his desk but most of them to go in the employees' rest-rooms, where they could be admired by those whose gardens were not so prolific of beauty. Always thinking of others! Whenever he visited Toronto, he always called on the friends of his early days. Often he gave banquets, and they were invited. He also helped them financially. Sometimes a banquet would be given to him. The last time he was in Toronto many of the prominent men of Canada gave a banquet in his honor, amongst those present being Sir Thomas White (Minister of Finance during the World War), Sir Henry Walker (President of the Bank of Commerce), Sir J. W. Flavelle, and others equally well known. He loved company, and the society of people who did things. He was never quite so happy as when he presided at a large table surrounded by members of his own family and his friends.

His abiding respect and love for his mother was a very prominent characteristic of his whole life. Shortly after he went to Seattle, his parents abandoned farming in Ontario and moved to Niagara Falls. In the early days of The Broadway it was necessary for Mr. Letts to make frequent trips to New York in search of merchandise, at which times he always had his ticket routed via Niagara Falls. After his father died—when on a visit to his two children who still remained in England—he brought his mother out to California, and installed her in a home suitable to her station in life. "Grandma Letts," as she was affectionately called, was a great favorite with all who knew her, especially the employees of The Broadway. She embodied a supremely high degree of intelligence and refinement, while her accomplishments from a literary and musical standpoint brought much joy to her hosts of friends. Withal, she was an extremely beautiful and saintly old lady. She passed away in her seventy-seventh year after a very brief illness, at a time when Arthur and his family were in Europe. Though the fastest trains and steamers were taken, she died when her son was in mid-Atlantic. In a message to his employees in reply to their expressions of sympathy, Arthur Letts said:

> ". . . Everyone of you, I am sure, can understand my grief, being so far from home and making such desperate efforts to reach my dear mother's bedside in time to have a last word, a last Good-bye, and then to arrive too late; the dear soul had passed away. I was never again to see or speak to her—the very best friend I had.
>
> "All through my life I tried in every possible way to make the life of my dear mother pleasant, one of peace and happiness; if I could only impress upon the boys and girls in my employ what it means to say when your dear mother has passed away, 'I have no regret.' Real happiness comes through consideration for another, and surely your mother has the first place."

Not only to his mother was he extremely kind. He also purchased a nice house in Toronto for his mother-in-law. He sent to Whitby college the nieces of both sides of the family and paid for their education. He helped his brothers, and set-up some of them in life.

Like many grandparents, he seemed to derive the greatest happiness from the companionship of his grandchildren. Rarely did he make a tour of the store but what packages for them would arrive at his office from various departments, purchased as he went along. If he saw a new and interesting toy, his grandchildren were sure to possess it. And they, in turn—Betty, Virginia and Dolly; Jane, Ann, and Malcolm Junior—were equally fond of their granddaddy. "Great-heart" was a term often applied to Arthur Letts, and there were few men to whom it was more befitting. Surely it was not surprising when a delegation of

THE PARENTS
OF
ARTHUR LETTS
1900

Richard Letts

Caroline Coleman
Letts

A children's party at Arthur Letts' Home

As a friend of little children

colored people—strangers to him—one day waited upon him in his office and presented him with a hand-engrossed appreciation of his interest in their behalf:

MR. ARTHUR LETTS:

OUR FRIEND

May this world be blest with more like you—
It is not the great, but the small things we do
That count in life to the weary and oppressed;
We appreciate all, for you have done your best.

And when you leave this world of sorrow,
Perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow,
May God look down and say, "Well Done" to thee,
"For as you did unto others, You Did Unto Me."

CHAPTER VIII

Recreation

CHAPTER VIII

RECREATION

IN WRITING biographies, it is perhaps unusual to devote a chapter to recreation. This phase of a man's life is usually dismissed in a few paragraphs; and sometimes rightly so, for only too frequently it is something to which scant attention is paid. We have all seen the pathetic figures of men who could not let go after their greatest usefulness was past; of other men who dropped before they realized their arrival at the end of the road; and, most pathetic of all, of men who, having retired, but because of lack of inner resources did not know what to do with themselves, had become a trial to themselves, their families, and their communities.

No matter how long Arthur Letts had lived, he would never have fallen into this category, for he was a man of many hobbies, and all through life had not only advocated recreation for others, but saw to it that he took sufficient himself. In this life so richly fine, he had many interests that yielded him untold joy.

Even as a boy he was a great lover of the out-of-doors life. His enthusiasm for cricket, and skating, and riding his "high bicycle," has already been mentioned. He was also fond of taking long walks, and would spend hours at a time rambling over the countryside. When he went to Canada he took up fretwork as a hobby, and the long winter evenings would invariably find him busy with his fret-saw.

Left among other mementos in the bottom of a drawer were some scrap-books filled with epitaphs and poems, collected presumably during his early twenties. As evidence of what must have appealed to him in those days, they are quite interesting. Among the epitaphs occur the following:

In a Manchester Churchyard:

Here rests in silent clay
  Miss Arabella Young,
Who on the 21st of May,
  Began to hold her tongue.

Tottenham Churchyard:

By the grace of God,
  A dutiful daughter,
A faithful wife,
  An excellent mother.

In an English Graveyard:

Here lies a man who did no good
  And if he lived he never would.
Where he's gone and how he fares
  Nobody knows and nobody cares.

In a Devonshire Churchyard:

Beneath this stone, in sound repose
  Lies William Rich of Lydeard Close.
Eight wives he had, yet none survive,
  And likewise children eight times five,
From whom an issue vast did pour,
  Of great-grandchildren five times four.
Rich born, rich bred, yet Fate adverse,
  His wealth and fortune did reverse.
He lived and died immensely poor,
  July the 10th, aged ninety-four.

In a French Cemetery:

Husband and Wife
I am anxiously expecting you. A.D. 1827
Here I am. A.D. 1867

And among the poems:

THE FUNNY MAN'S BABY

I

The funny man went to his desk to write.
He had watched all day, he would write all night
And finish his work, so he trimmed the light.

II

In the room adjoining his baby lay,
And they said she was slowly passing away,
And would die ere the light of another day.

III

So he wrote, with his heart in the other room,
And thought of the babe going out in the gloom
To the shadowy land beyond the tomb.

IV

It was hard to write with death so nigh,
But he ground out jokes as the hours went by,
And closed each page with a grief-born sigh.

V

It was hard to write; but the world must laugh,
So he penned the rhyme and the paragraph,
And even a humorous epitaph!

VI

His pen flew fast and the hours went on
Till his night of toil was almost gone,
And the east showed the first faint streaks of dawn.

VII

Then he dropped his pen and raised his head;
"Now the column is finished," the funny man said;
And the nurse, coming in, said, "The baby is dead."

—*The Boston Courier.*

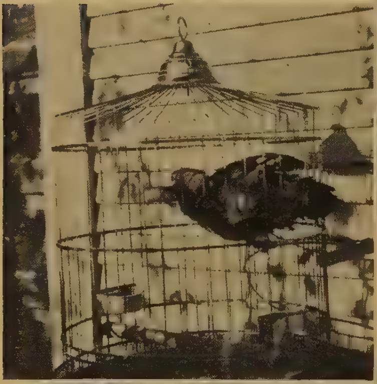
During his early years in the United States—those seven years of struggle in Seattle and the first few years in Los Angeles—Arthur Letts had little time for recreation. He was too busy fighting for his existence, striving to keep clear of the yawning chasm of ruin and despair, the while he hammered out the weapons with which, in the end, he surmounted the obstacles to his onward march. With the ultimate growth of The Broadway, and his head now coming above water, we find him in 1900 living in a comfortable home on Rampart Street, again giving free indulgence to his hobbies. He was up early every morning and in the garden, busy with his flowers, grubbing, hoeing, digging, tending his favorite roses. The flowers cared for, he would step into his aviary and would stay for a while talking to his beautiful little songsters, a collection from all parts of the world. He was a member of the California Audubon Society, and took a great interest in its laudable work of saving the birds. He was literally surrounded by pets. Whenever he walked through his garden or across the lawn, he would be followed by a string of dogs—collies, fox terriers, and spaniels—and sometimes a cat bringing up the rear. There was a pony for the children to ride upon, and a little foal that had the run of the kitchen as well as the garden. But the life of the household was the parrot. How that bird could talk! Many are the stories that have been told about that parrot; but there is one, at least, that can be vouched for. One winter the bird was sick and was kept in the warmth of the kitchen for a long period. When he was restored to the dining room, he showed only a scant interest in the first meal he was called upon to witness, until the bell was rung for the second course, and then his eye lightened intelligently. "Aw," he croaked, balefully, "let 'em ring again!"

The Rampart Street Home

A pony for the children to ride on

"Gypsy"—Arthur Letts' favorite Spaniel

A little foal had the run of the premises



"Pol"—the life of the household

Always an abundance of puppies

FAMILY PETS

Like many others, Arthur Letts loved the out-of-doors life more and more as he grew older. He bought a ranch at Hollywood, near what is now the corner of Franklin and Gower. Here he cultivated citrus fruits with the same personal energy that he devoted to his business. The foothills of Hollywood fascinated him greatly. In 1905 he acquired a little over one hundred acres of land bordering on Vermont Avenue, on which he laid out his now-famous garden, and erected thereon his home, which he named Holmby House in memory of his birthplace in Old England.

From that time on, Arthur Letts always lived in the country, and it was to this fact that he attributed much of his enthusiasm. He saw the loveliness of the country and his life had the country tone or, you might say, the country tonic. He heard the songs of the birds. He saw the beauty of the flowers. He took it upon himself to advise every man who was under a strain to live in the country, or at least in the suburbs; to get near to Nature, for the nearer he got to Nature, the better man he would be. He held that to be one of Nature's own rules, as fixed and certain as Nature's laws.

Once established in his Hollywood home, he was able to undertake the breeding of poultry and dogs on a much broader scale. He purchased the best stock he could get and gained much fame by the manner in which his entries took the prizes at the poultry shows and bench shows. At first his fancy in chickens was for Minorcas, but he switched later to Buff Orpingtons. He imported a great deal of his foundation stock from England, and obtained five winners from the St. Louis World's Fair. His pens contained some of the best blood in America and England. Moreover, he gave them all his personal attention.

It is surprising that, in a life crowded with so many material responsibilities, he should find time for the cultivation of tastes involving technical study and experience. An examination of his correspondence files of that period discloses the enormous amount of attention he devoted to his hobbies; many of the letters being quite interesting. The following letter was written to a noted poultry fancier in Nebraska:

"Dear Sir:

"Three pullets came forward yesterday by Wells Fargo Express. Two of them are beauties. I would like to know how you manage to get birds of this class, as I have never bred any pullets nearly as fine as these, and I have been told that I have about the best in this locality.

"I have had no difficulty in raising large cockerels, running up to 11½ lbs. at from 11 to 12 months old, but they will show white in the hackle feathers near the skin, and also white in the tail and flight.

"I have written an article on Buff Orpingtons, which is shortly to be published in our City, and when it comes out, I want you to criticise it, and see how far astray I am in my ideas of Buff Orpingtons."

That hobbies may cause trouble as well as pleasure, the following is indicative:

"Dear Sir:

"The eggs reached me Saturday in a basket—that is, what was left of them. Upon opening the basket, I found that six were broken, mashed, and 25 good eggs, which I proceeded to set under two hens on Sunday. Whether my religious scruples were not correct, or the hens rebelled against starting setting on Sunday, or the devil got into one of my collies, I don't know, anyway the collie broke through the fence and upset the hens, and they would not set that day, but broke some of the eggs for me; so that is my luck.

"By evening, I got the hens quieted down, and they started in to work good and hard today. They are both setting now with what eggs are left."

Even petty complaints received personal attention, as witness the following:

"Dear Sir:

"I am in receipt of your letter of the 4th inst., and am surprised at the tone of same. One would think that you had received a tremendous injury, and that the damages were immense, instead of two broken eggs valued at 50c, for which I herewith enclose you postage stamps. If you are still dissatisfied and will return the balance of the eggs, I will remit you the entire amount of your purchase, together with what express charges you have paid. I know of no better way of pleasing anyone so greatly disappointed as you assume to be. By this method, I feel that your injuries will be healed.

"I am more than pleased to see you have estimated me correctly. I *am* a farmer, and come of a race of farmers, which I am very proud of. That I am not an expert in packing goods, I admit. I gave these eggs to the man in charge of the wrapping department of my establishment, who considers himself quite an expert. Sometimes, if an iron box were sent out, the express company would manage, in some manner, to break it. I presume my packer did the best he could, and he has certainly been very successful with the large number of eggs I have shipped through him this season.

"You consider me a back number. I am not usually classed with "has beens." However, my reputation is such that I do not think your opinion will be of much weight.

"You consider these eggs high priced at $3.00 per setting of 13. Three Dollars must appear a very large sum of money to you, and I guess you lay the foundation for a still greater kick when these eggs should hatch. I presume you would expect 14 chickens out of 13 eggs.

"I rather imagine, Mr. ———, that when you wrote this letter, you were feeling in a bad humor, and no doubt had you waited a short time, you would not have written in the same tone. I always find it advisable (and I do some little business), that when one feels in a bad state of mind, it is a very good policy to leave letter writing until the fit has worn off. I have never yet known a letter of the nature which you have written, to do any good or accomplish any purpose other than antagonize the party to whom it was written. This advice might not be to your liking, but I have lived long enough to think it pretty good advice. Never write a letter when you are angry.

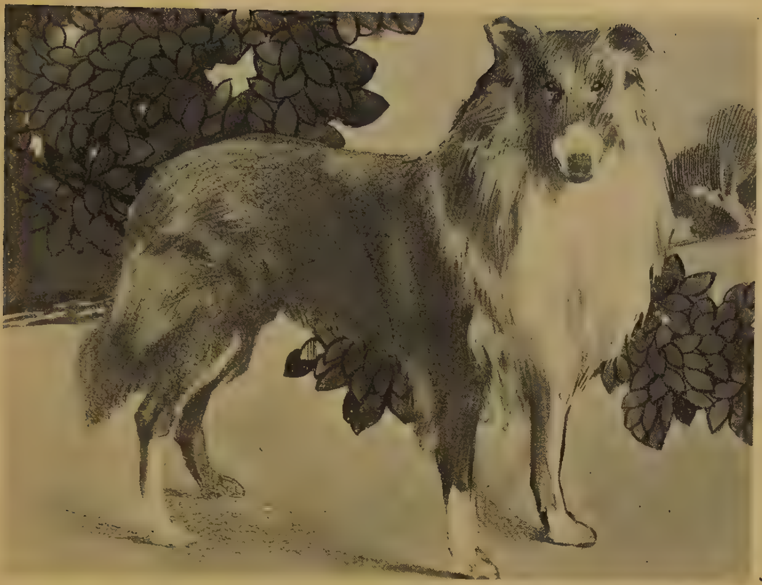
"I know of no other policy than to do as I have done. If you are still dissatisfied, return the eggs and your money will be forthcoming. This is my business policy, and I carry it out in my private affairs.

"I think you understand that I am not selling eggs and poultry for a living. It is a matter of amusement to me, and I have never knowingly sold anything to an unsatisfied person.

Yours very truly,
Arthur Letts."

The fame of Arthur Letts' collie dogs travelled far. For several years the Holmby Kennels cleaned up most of the prizes in the collie classes at the bench shows. At one show these kennels scored 187½ points and took the blue ribbon for the best kennel of any breed, together with six cups and a number of medals. Friends never ceased to wonder how this man could devote so much time to his pets. He seemed to be as well-versed in matters pertaining to the dog world, as he was in the absorbing interests of his great business. He was ever ready to gossip about the prevailing quality of the average dog biscuit, the popularity of mutton as against beef bones, the distemper question, and all other important topics of what might be termed "canine conversation."

His love of collies was great, and he did much to raise the standard of collies in California. He imported from England the famous Ravenswood, winner of 37 firsts, and it was the progeny of this magnificent collie that swept the prizes at the bench shows both in Los Angeles and in San Francisco. As an exhibitor Arthur Letts was a good sportsman. He never protested an award. If he was beaten, he took his medicine in a sportsman-like manner, rather than raise a controversy among dog fanciers. He always maintained that no matter how a protest was settled there was invariably more or less bad feeling, and he would infinitely rather be the injured party than have any other persons think themselves injured by him.



Ravenswood, the famous stud of the Holmby Kennels (*from a drawing*)

Silver Cups won by Arthur Letts with his Poultry and Dogs

Filling up the water tank

Mr. and Mrs. Letts starting out for a Sunday afternoon ride

Below—On West 7th St.—before the days of traffic problems

EARLY DAYS OF MOTORING

It seems to be the bane of bench shows that great numbers of individual exhibitors think their own particular dog the very best dog that ever scurried over a lawn or gnawed a bone. That Arthur Letts appreciated the sympathetic efforts of the ring officials to pour oil on troubled waters is evidenced by the following letter:

"May 20th, 1905.

"Mr. W. J. Morris, Supt.,
Bench Show, S. W. K. Club,
City.

"My dear Mr. Morris:

"You are undoubtedly the best natured club member that we have. How you could keep your head when so many people were talking to you at the same time, listening to the tales of woe; with many asking you this and that about their dog, when would this class be shown; what was the number of their dog; when would the judging for specials come and when would the medals be given, etc.? How did you stand it? Always the pleasant answer and kindly smile were given.

"To you, much of the success of this recent Show is due. You were a hard worker. Personally, I extend my hearty thanks for what you have done, and will quote the words of Judge Ashton, who says, 'It was the best managed Show that he has seen on the Coast, and the future of the S. W. K. C. with its present members is a bright one.'

"Judge Ashton expressed to me his appreciation for the things that were done to make it pleasant for him. He stated that he will take with him on his travels, a very kindly feeling for our Club and City, and hopes to visit us again at some future time.

"Allow me to congratulate you upon your wins. You certainly understand pointers, and decidedly head the list as the most successful exhibitor.

"With best wishes, I am

Yours truly,
ARTHUR LETTS."

Arthur Letts was a director of the South-Western Kennel Club, and was urged to accept the presidency of the California Collie Club; which, however, he declined, as he felt that he could not devote the proper amount of time to it. He was very much attached to his dogs, and hated to part with them. A few excerpts from sundry letters perhaps will serve to show how deeply he felt the parting with a dog:

"She has a beautiful disposition, and I shall feel somewhat sorrowful to part with her. I expect it will be several months before I really forget her, if ever. Isn't it strange how one becomes attached to a dog? I have raised her from a little puppy. She is now over two years old, and has never yet had a whipping. I doubt if she would really know what it means, probably would never get over it if she did get one. This makes me so sorry to part with her although I am selling her to one I am sure will use her well."

Here is another:

"Answering your very kind letter to the 14th inst. wherein you state that the little doggie arrived safely and you are well pleased with him. Do you know I had a half feeling that I hoped you would return him. However, the morning I said good-bye, I expected it was for good. I get so attached to my dogs, that I really hate to part with them.

"I am sure he has gone to one who will appreciate his qualities, and from the tone of your letters, I can see he has got into good hands. I think this dog will please you more as he gets older.

"I would never want anyone to keep one of my dogs if they were not perfectly satisfied. They are almost like children to me, and I would not, for any price, sell one of them to any one that I thought would not treat them well.

"I enclose you a part of the pedigree of Ravenswood. You will find there the most aristocratic blood of Europe, and pedigree means a lot in a collie."

Throughout his correspondence there is that ever-recurring reference to his affection for his dogs:

"I am in receipt of yours of the 11th inst. with marked catalogue of San Francisco Show, for which many thanks. I appreciate the kindness, but still more appreciate that I did not misjudge the man to whom I sent Bonnie Doon. I judged from the tone of your letter that he was passing into better hands possibly than mine. I shall never forget the day I sent him to you. When I said good-bye, I had a big notion not to let him go. I have such an affection for the collies, and particularly my own, that it is so hard to part with them, and I am *delighted* to think you love him so much, and that he has been such a source of satisfaction to you as well as such a splendid animal."

It was this intense love of his dogs that eventually led Arthur Letts to dispose of his kennels. His collies had so increased in number that he could not give them the personal attention that was his wont, and the indifference to the dogs' comfort shown by some of his men during his enforced absence on business exasperated him greatly. So he set about finding good homes for his pedigreed pets and gradually turned his attention more and more to his garden and his flowers.

At one time Arthur Letts did much horseback riding. He was always fond of horses, but never indulged himself further than to keep a high-spirited saddle horse. His was a familiar figure on the streets of Hollywood, sitting astride a fine bay, and often he would ride to and from business. The gradual encroachment of the automobile, however, and the paving of the roads with asphalt, took away much of the joy, and the final chapter to his horseback riding was written one evening as he was riding home from the Store. While crossing the car tracks, his horse became frightened, slipped, and threw him heavily to the ground. He sustained severe bruises and was unconscious for some time. From that time on, his enthusiasm for horseback riding began to wane, and there came a day when his horse was turned loose to spend the remainder of his life in pasture.

The automobile now provided Arthur Letts with his chief method of locomotion, and he grew enthusiastic over the possibilities of the motor car, notwithstanding the fact that, in those days, automobile advancement was often referred to as a fad, autoists were accused of having the "gasoline fever," and their cars were spoken of in satirical vein as "benzine buggies," "chug wagons," "red devils," and such.

The police, in those days, had the measurement of every block of the down-town streets, and the time it should take to drive that block at the rate of twelve miles an hour. Any speed in excess of that was pretty sure to bring a healthy fine upon the offender. Strange as it may seem, the Los Angeles City Council instructed the City Attorney to frame an amendment to the hitching ordinance so as to include automobiles.

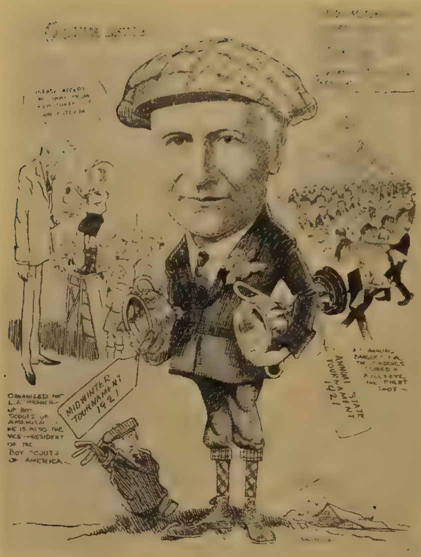
Arthur Letts' first automobile was a White Steamer—a car with a very complicated system of controls. Those control valves caused him a great deal of grief, for he invariably managed to turn the wrong one. As his own chauffeur, Arthur Letts was not by any means a success. He was always in too much of a hurry, and an inventory of the inanimate objects with which he collided during the course of a month would constitute quite a list. However, his interest in motoring never flagged and he was urged by Dr. Milbank Johnson, then president of the Automobile Club of Southern California, to become one of the Board of Governors of the Club. This honor he had to decline on account of inability to spare the necessary time.

The White Steamer eventually gave way to a Tourist, a local car manufactured by the Auto Vehicle Company. This in turn was superseded by a Stoddard Dayton, and that by a Pierce Arrow. The Pierce Arrow was his favorite car for many years—until he succumbed to the luxury of a Rolls Royce.

Fishing was indulged in only occasionally. Arthur Letts did not possess the necessary patience to make a good fisherman. If the fish were biting, and his creel was full—all well and good; but to go out for a day, and have nothing

Arthur Letts (*right*) and E. T. Earl (*left*) after a day's fishing at Lake Tahoe

The Bowling Alley, at Holmby House


ORGANIZED THE L.A. BRANCH OF BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA HE IS ALSO THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
MIDWINTER TOURNAMENT 1921
ANNUAL STATE TOURNAMENT 1921

From the California Club Members Green Book

The marvel of the Seniors

to show for it, filled him with disgust. The only real satisfaction he ever had out of a day's fishing was at Lake Tahoe, where his boatman seemed to have the faculty of knowing just when and where the best fish could be found.

Bowling was a pastime in which he took much pleasure, and it must be admitted that at duck-pins he excelled. His score would usually amount to 130 or 150. He made many very high scores, some of which, made as many as fifteen years ago, are still posted in the bowling alley at Tahoe Tavern. Several times he won the Silver Cup presented by Tahoe Tavern for the highest score made by any bowler during the season. His fondness for bowling prompted him to have a private alley built in his grounds near the house, and here the family would gather of an evening for a little after-dinner exercise.

Arthur Letts took a great delight in books, somewhat rare in one so occupied with big business affairs. He had books everywhere—in his automobile, on the train, in his home, and at the office. In spite of the snow in his hair, there was a juvenility in his imaginative mind that gave an added joy to his reading. He would sit up until the small hours of the morning eagerly devouring the pages of a thrilling detective story, in the hope that his own theory of the problem's solution was the correct one; for, be it known, good detective stories were his chief delight.

His interest in yachting was meager, although he did take quite an interest in the International Cup races, and in 1913 subscribed $5,000.00 toward a fund for getting a yacht to represent Los Angeles in the race for the International Cup offered by Sir Thomas Lipton, to be raced for in the gala year of 1915—the year of the Panama Pacific Exposition. Events in Europe, however, caused the plans for this international race to be abandoned.

It was only in the later years of his life that Arthur Letts took up golf. His friends so persistently urged upon him the pleasure and healthfulness of the game that he eventually decided to play it; and, what is more, he learned to play a straight-driving, good game, despite his years.

One would naturally assume that Mr. Letts would be a bold player, never thinking of playing safe, having plenty of confidence in his ability to get out of difficulty. Such, however, was not his game. His chief characteristic was to place every shot straight. He let distance take care of itself. "Keep them straight," was his motto, for he hated to get off the fairway. He played a very consistent game, invariably shooting between 87 and 95. He had an 18 handicap, and was considered a very hard man to beat on his handicap. His specialty was match play. He won a number of sweepstake cups, and also won his flight in the California State Amateur Championship Tournament at Del Monte in 1921. He was referred to in press despatches as "the marvel of the seniors."

His one great ambition in life was to trim his son, Arthur Junior, without any reference to handicap. This would have been no mean feat, for his son's handicap was but eight. However, the father never quite succeeded in his ambition, although there were times, when his son was out of form, that he came remarkably close to achieving that which his heart most desired.

It was at the 1921 State Amateur Championship at Del Monte that Arthur Letts gave a banquet to 200 or more caddies—a banquet that made golfing "history" as far as Del Monte was concerned. It caused as much talk on the links as the championship itself, and proved one of the greatest events for caddies ever staged.

Convinced that the caddies were becoming more and more an important factor in the game, Arthur Letts felt they should be allowed to participate in the gala events which always surrounded the annual golf celebration at Del Monte. The caddies' sentiments in the matter were aptly expressed in a verse, written by J. E. S. Heath, that adorned the banquet menu:

Oh Boy! Listen fellers! Have you heard the news?
This is surely something that will drive away the blues.
Good sport Arthur Letts is giving us a feed.
Now that's a thing, it seems to me, is sure just what we need,
For we've been lugging bags around for all these golfing guys,
They mostly seem to think that we are only legs and eyes.
Now this man Letts, he's wise to us, he sure has got us right—
The biggest thing about a boy is just his appetite!

Before the banquet, the 200 caddies paraded through the hotel headed by the professionals and were played into the banquet room by the bagpipes of "Scotty" Chisholm.

A year later, the followers of golf read in the Sporting News columns of a number of California papers, the following item:

"LETTS WILL BE MISSED IN DEL MONTE TOURNEY

"Arthur Letts, Sr., along with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Letts, Jr., will be much missed at the state amateur championship at Del Monte next month. All three of them sail for Europe on September 2nd, and when their baggage is put aboard the steamer in New York three sets of golf clubs will form part of said baggage.

"They expect to play over the principal golf courses of England and Scotland during their sojourn overseas, first playing the English courses and then working their way leisurely up to the famous Scottish links. Mr. Letts, Sr., was a most picturesque figure at last year's championship, and notwithstanding his advanced age, ran away with one of the trophies in about the tenth flight. It was his custom to play 36 holes every single day of his Del Monte visit and then offer to run a footrace or some similarly strenuous athletic feat after dinner. His famous caddie banquet of last year was one of the big social functions of the championship meet, and hundreds of the caddies will sadly miss the venerable gentleman."

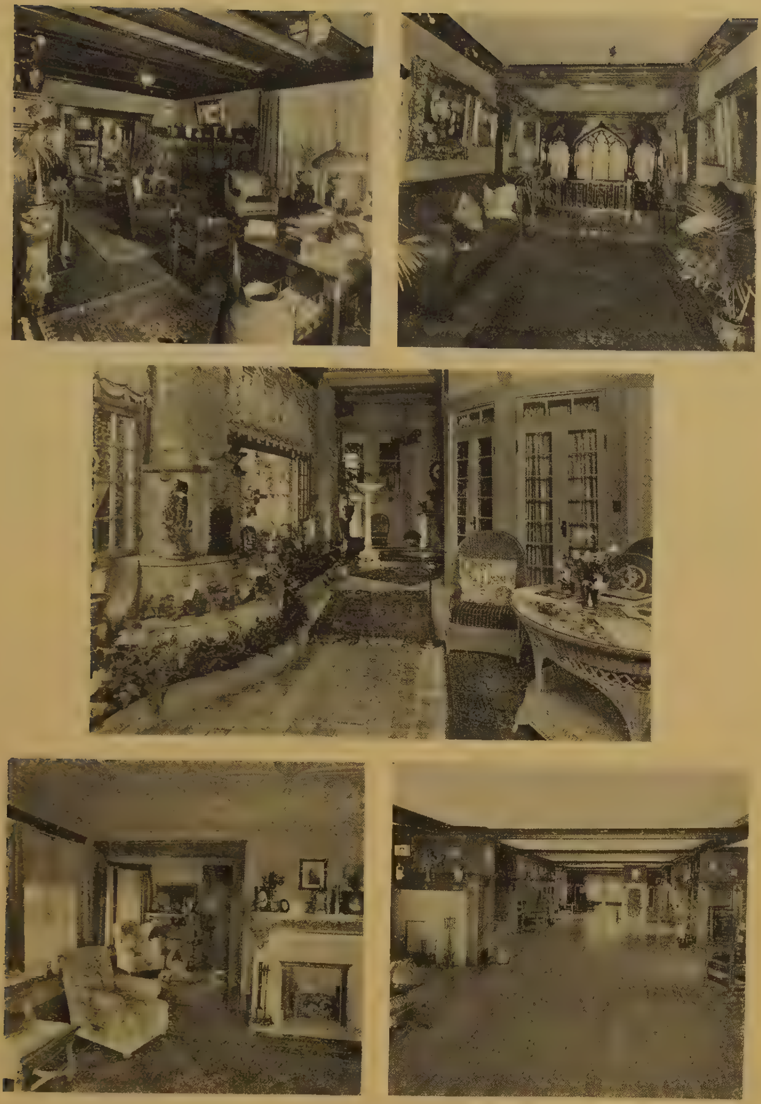
Before another tournament had rolled around, the "venerable gentleman" had passed to the great Beyond.

Arthur Letts belonged to a number of golf clubs, including the Los Angeles Country Club, Wilshire Country Club, Flintridge Country Club, and the Eagle Waters Golf Club in Wisconsin.

The Los Angeles Country Club was his favorite, and for a while he served on the Board of Directors. There is today a footbridge crossing a steep ravine on the south course of this club on which there is a brass plate inscribed "Lett's go over," in memory of the man who erected the bridge in order that others as well as himself could the better enjoy the game.

During later years Arthur Letts mingled considerably in the social life of Los Angeles; he became a club man of generous hospitality, and was a familiar figure in the California Club, the Los Angeles Athletic Club, and also at the Bohemian Club in San Francisco.

But, after all, it was on his Hollywood estate that he spent the happiest hours of his busy life, among the flowers and trees and birds. When he bought the land it was nothing but a barren hillside. Not even barley would grow there, and as for trees, these were none but a few dilapidated old peppers along the Franklin Avenue frontage; but he said that he would make it a beauty-spot people would travel hundreds of miles to see. His friends said he was crazy, and the jocular pointed out that it would take ten thousand dollars a year to feed the gophers alone. Arthur Letts took his suspenders up a notch, drew a few dollars from the bank, and went to work to demonstrate.



Upper left—In the Living Room. *Upper right*—The Upper Hall. *Center*—The North Porch. *Lower left*—Commodious Dressing Rooms. *Lower right*—The Ball Room

THE INTERIOR OF HOLMBY HOUSE

Bristling bayonets

A bit of Old Mexico

The Agaves in bloom

The Bells of the Yucca

IN THE CACTUS GARDEN

First of all, he erected his beautiful home, Holmby House, furnished it with great care, filled it with books and exquisite paintings, and then turned his attention to what developed into his greatest hobby—horticulture—although he frequently referred to it as an "offset to business" rather than a hobby. Said he, one day, to an interviewer:

> "No, I don't call it a hobby. It is an offset to business. I am so interested in the details of this ambitious scheme that I forget business. Here I am out of doors, moving actively, kept alive by my interest, and continually creating—because a planting scheme is not an accident, it is a studied result. The other side of my garden-collecting takes me about the world. Most of my plants I have found and bought myself. And all the time I have in mind the permanence of this garden—that it will live always and grow always more beautiful, more precious, more worth while. That is something to do, isn't it?"

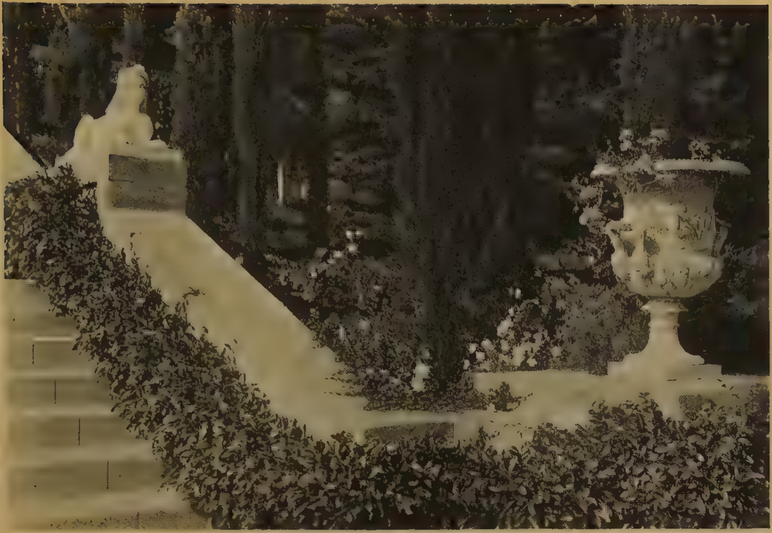
Among the durable satisfactions of life there is perhaps none greater than that of an intimate kinship and love of Nature, flowers and all growing things.

During the first few years there were numerous obstacles to overcome. Most important was the water supply. This had to be developed at large expense. A number of wells were dug, and water had to be pumped for half-a-mile. Even so, during the hot summer months, there was never sufficient. It was not until the completion of the Los Angeles aqueduct in 1913 that this obstacle was finally conquered. Moreover, Arthur Letts was so incumbered with business during those first years that the place was of necessity left to the mercies of superintendents of varying tastes, capabilities, and efficiency. One would do and the rest would undo. Nearly every nationality from which gardeners spring was represented. The planting of one year would be moved elsewhere the next; or, perchance, would all be dead. Finally, Arthur Letts realized that if his ideals were to be attained, he would have to be the "attainer." So he threw himself into his garden, heart and soul. He developed his property to a point where architecture, landscape gardening, and formal art combined with Nature to win the applause of the most exacting critics.

One day his secretary enquired of him if he had any idea what his place had cost him up to date. "No," replied Mr. Letts, "and I do not want to know. This garden is the one thing in my life that is going to measure up to my ideal now and for a hundred years to come, and I do not propose to place a money value on it."

That was the spirit in which he worked, and that spirit was reflected in a thousand beautiful ways. He knew every tree on the place, and felt that the attention which he gave a tree established a personal relation between himself and it. He could never forgive a workman who let a tree perish from inattention. Another thing which gave him profound sorrow in the death of one of his trees, was the awful waste of time. "It is never the money which represents the first cost of the trees," he said, "which puts me out of patience with the man who permits a tree to die. It is the criminal waste of precious time. When, in a night, the life of fifteen years goes out on the white breath of a single frost, I am sickened by the terrible extravagance. Fifteen years have been lost to the tree and to the world, and no power can ever give them back."

Arthur Letts' collection of cacti and succulents was considered the finest private collection in America, if not in the world. The government created his cactus garden a United States sub-station. That this great merchant should be regarded as an expert in horticulture was evidenced by the fact that he was selected to represent America on the advisory board of the committee having in charge the Inter-



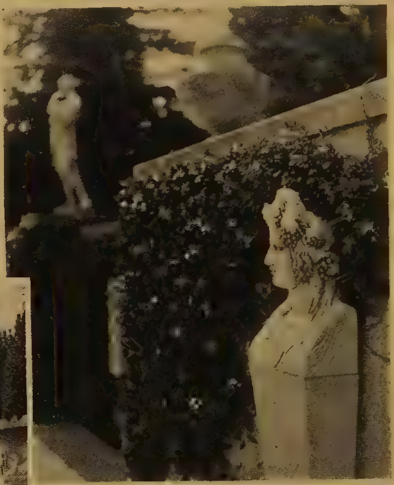
The Sphinx of the Cypresses

The Roman Well—Sacrifice of the Bull

History in marble

MARBLE SCULPTURES PLACED WITH RARE JUDGMENT

Aurora, the great center panel of the Terrace



Goddess of the Vine, at Sundown

The Terrace Steps

national Horticultural Exhibit in London in 1912. On this board were the King and Queen of England, as well as eminent botanists from every country in the world. Commenting on this appointment, one editor wrote as follows:

"ARTHUR LETTS' PREFERMENT

"Arthur Letts has been chosen to represent America at the International Horticultural Exhibit at London in 1912, and this selection will please every lover of rare plants and architectural gardening who knows the value and inspiration given to landscape work by his achievements at Hollywood.

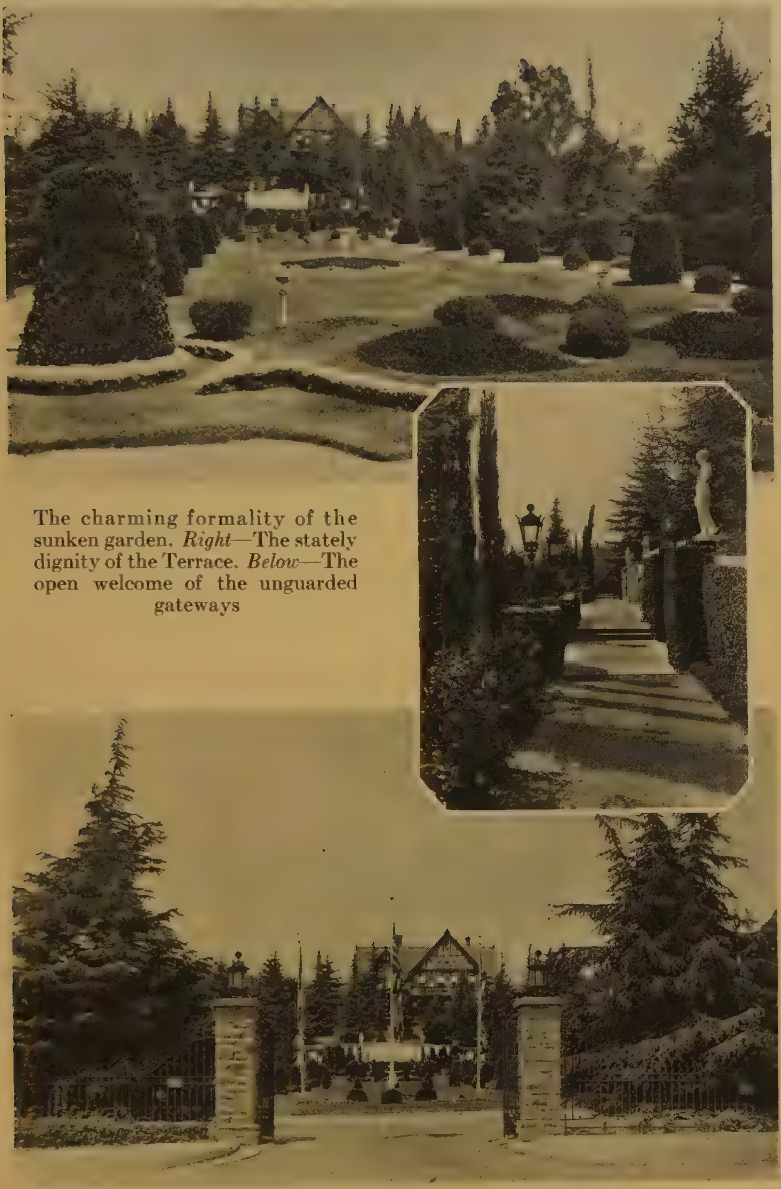
"During the earlier years of his work in beautifying these premises, I had the opportunity of inspecting many of the rare and costly plants he had selected for planting and I know the quality, expense and judgment involved in the results. Mr. Letts' private grounds cover exactly the same area occupied by the Capitol Park at Sacramento and those who know what the State pays for the maintenance of this park can appreciate to some extent the labor and expense involved in building up and keeping the Hollywood estate. But Mr. Letts has expended ten dollars where the State has spent one, as his plants are the most valuable and rare that money can command."

California had no plant nursery in those days offering large lists of really good trees and shrubs, so Arthur Letts began an extensive correspondence with the great plant emporiums of Europe and countries below the equator; with botanical gardens and commercial collectors and plant explorers; and when the grounds were ready for their reception he traveled much for enjoyment, reaping a double pleasure in such journeys through gathering the rare material now envied by some of the government botanical gardens. Every nook and corner of the earth has representatives in this extensive plant collection. Not even an island, tropical though it may be, that has not sent its little quota. Ceylon, Madagascar, Mauritius, the Canaries—all are represented equally with the towering Himalayas, the Alps, or the jungles of the tropics.

Arthur Letts' gardens have been open to the public every Thursday from early morning until night, and for years have been a valuable asset to the moving picture industry. It is no exaggeration to say that all of us who attend the "movies" have witnessed many scenes taken in those beautiful gardens—scenes which probably we imagined were on the other side of the world, instead of but a mile or so from the studios. The school children of Los Angeles could learn more of botany in one day spent in those gardens than could possibly be learned from any book. Most of the plants are labeled with their scientific names, and the total botanical knowledge to be gained there could never be compiled in a single volume.

To one who has known the beautiful residences and estates of other lands, there is an especial charm about the approach and entrance to Holmby House. No lodge beside locked gates here, with liveried servants keeping guard; but, on the contrary, as one approaches on Kenmore avenue he is impressed with the open welcome of the unguarded gateways and drives.

The graceful branches of the many deodars seem to beckon to one to come closer and yet closer, while from row upon row of carefully-chosen specimen-trees that border the formal garden comes a burst of melody from a thousand tiny throats, the sweet songsters giving welcome as they wing their way from tree top to tree top. The beautiful statuary grouped on the terraces, the playing fountain, the restful Italian marble seats, all lend their aid to the development of the idea that here is to be found a largesse, a bounteous generosity and hospitality, in a home the master of which was a citizen of the world.



The charming formality of the sunken garden. *Right*—The stately dignity of the Terrace. *Below*—The open welcome of the unguarded gateways

THE APPROACH TO HOLMBY HOUSE

Above—The fountain in the formal garden

Whispering Palms

Below—The Cannas under the Palms

THE TROPICAL GARDEN

Through many acres of highly cultivated woods and garden meander winding roads, picturesque pathways, and well-kept walks, where one might linger for hours, resting now and then beneath some stately tree, or dropping down to enjoy at leisure some fine vista of distant ocean or purple-tipped mountains. Hither and yon are seats in sheltered nooks, niches harboring marble antiques, hot-houses and bowers of roses to entice to relaxation, dignified pergolas overhung with glorious tropical vines, and with tiled or gravel walks beneath their shelter leading, perhaps, to a rippling fountain or to the edge of a terrace where one may sit cosily at afternoon tea; or perhaps, in the summer evening, linger to look out over the moonlit valley, or watch the twinkling lights of the busy city of Los Angeles below.

The trellised walks about the great palm house are especially beautiful, for they shelter wondrous waxen begonias and rare ferns, and some of the lattices are woven from the natural branches of trees still covered with bark, in rustic fashion. The magnitude of this shade house is something to ponder. It is 200 feet long, 150 feet wide, and has a dome fifty-five feet in height. It is overflowing with rare plant life, and some of the palms have already lifted their stately heads to the superb height of the dome. There are palms in this shade house that are very rare.

Their great value lies first in their exquisite beauty, and secondly, in the fact that they are exclusive. This means that they are hybrids or "sports" of Arthur Letts' own production, and that they have no duplicates in any other garden.

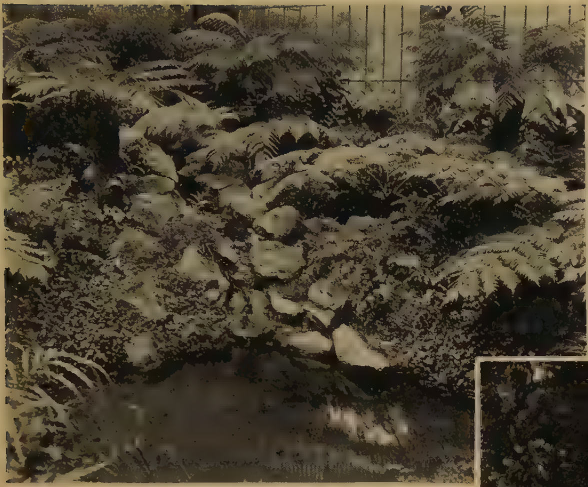
Near the terrace are many flowering trees—the magnolia, with its waxen blossoms; the Parkinsonia, with its feathering, drooping branches and melting yellow blossoms; and a magnificent Albizzia Julibrissin, its fern-like foliage enriched by great sprays of pale pink flowers: a tree full of fairy paint brushes, a wonderful bouquet of itself.

Bordering a pool upon whose limpid waters the lotus bloom is resting, is an "old-fashioned" garden. This garden thicket would beguile anyone with its luxuriant herbaceous growth, its seasonal delights that carry a surprise for each new-born day. Wordsworth's daffodils are singing their songs, and Burns' daisies, and Chaucer's "sweet harbingers of spring," all are here. As one walks the winding paths of this lovely garden, the mind is very apt to be traveling far away to the scenes of other days, for it is here that the flowers of sentiment bloom.

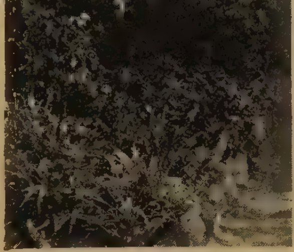
"Here where we stand
What a blaze of light,
What a wealth of color
Makes glad the sight."

Nearby is a rose garden that would delight the soul of Dean Hole. It is a place set apart, as a rose garden should be; for we grow roses for the pleasure they give to others as well as ourselves, and the flower for cutting deserves a special attention. It was the roses that Arthur Letts took to his store each morning that gave him so much pleasure. He said it made the day easier when he carried some of the morning freshness into his office with him. Some of the loveliest baskets of waxen buds that ever grew came from that rose garden, and seeing them you would not believe it possible that they were grown in the open air, without any forcing, and no heat but that of the warm California sun.

"The lily has an air
And the snowdrop a grace,
And the sweet pea a way,
And the heart's-ease a face—
Yet there's nothing like the rose
When she blows."



A fern-kissed pool



"The Lilies lean along the way Serene on either hand"

Feathery grasses bathed in Sunshine

The lotus pool —as in a forest jungle

THE MOVING SPIRIT IN ALL THIS LOVELINESS

What a fine, wholesome recreation was this penchant of Arthur Letts for rare plants, dainty orchids, and exquisite roses! What a respite from the carking cares of business this flowering retreat must have yielded! When letters of appreciation came from those who visited the place, as sometimes there did, these letters were passed on to the gardeners and other faithful workers whose labor had made so much of the beauty possible, that they might have their share in the praise.

It was a source of deep regret to the friends of Arthur Letts that the man who had been the moving spirit in all this loveliness could not have lived longer to enjoy the beauties his sensitive tastes had evolved.

CHAPTER IX

The End of the Trail

CHAPTER IX

THE END OF THE TRAIL

LITTLE more remains to be said. The artificer of his own fortunes, the winner of his own success, Arthur Letts was not only a man of affairs, but was glad to be designated also as one of the world's army of productive workers. Large of spirit and large of soul, he found that life meant much, and he strove with much of zeal and earnestness to prove himself worthy of success and of the respect of "all sorts and conditions of men."

Thinking, trying, toiling, and trusting in God, is the essence of his biography.

The great business enterprises for which he was responsible did not "happen;" they did not grow by mere luck. Every advance of this remarkable builder was the result of profound reasoning, a keen understanding of human psychology, and unswerving faith. How much hereditary qualities played in his success, or how greatly his life was affected by his early training and environment, none but Arthur Letts himself could have told.

He had unlimited determination, was a hard fighter, and never would be beaten.

On the trains, at his clubs, in the hotels, at public dinners, he was one of the easiest to approach, and he seemed at all times to be of use to his interviewer or visitor.

During his early years in Los Angeles he was a vestryman at St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral, yet he rarely entered into religious discussion with anyone. He was a man among men, worked out his principles, and made practical use of them—made a success of them! Too much faith in God's indulgent care is the fault of many lazy saints. Too little faith in God or man is the fault of many wealthy great men. But nowhere in the record of Arthur Letts' wonderfully active life does there appear a time or an act which indicates any lack of balance.

He worked at a large desk of beautiful mahogany, fitted with the usual desk equipment. Also, on his desk daily was a bouquet of flowers from his gardens, which usually was given away before the day was over.

In person he was a man over six feet tall and finely built, and all his motions had in them the springiness of perfect health. Few men had his powers of endurance. He was faultlessly groomed, and a flower in the lapel of his coat, the exact shade of his cravat, was an invariable part of his attire.

His face ever had upon it an expression of geniality and of warm-hearted amiability. Ever quick and spry in his actions, no one could be in his presence without catching something of the spirit of his wide-awake, all-pervading energy.

Said the Rev. J. Whitcomb Brougher one day:

"I knew him well, and loved his jovial nature. I remember on one occasion, after I had spoken at a banquet, he said: 'Well, if Dr. Brougher can be as funny as that without a cocktail, what would he be with a cocktail?' But prohibition came in soon after that, so no one ever had a chance to find out!"

Arthur Letts smoked ten, and sometimes more, cigars a day. He was not a total abstainer, but would never permit alcoholic beverages to be served at Store banquets given periodically to his managers. He would tip lavishly for good services, and pay nothing whatever for bad service. Usually he carried several hundred dollars in new money with him. He would not use old money.

He was a member of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Realty Board, Municipal League, City Club, Hollywood Board of Trade, Federation Club, and Automobile Club, as well as the various social and country clubs mentioned in the previous chapter.

He was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Hollywood Lodge, on the evening of the 5th of February, 1906, and later became a Knight Templar and a Shriner.

He knew people, for he had studied them closely, and he had an intimate knowledge of their psychological processes. It was his marvelous ability to appeal to them that enabled him to build, with their support and approval, the monument which today stands as a mighty tribute to his genius. It would be entirely appropriate to place somewhere in the great department store which he founded the epitaph inscribed on the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren, in the Cathedral which was the crowning glory of his career: "*Si monumentum requiris circumspice*"—"If you seek his monument, look around you."

When he left to go upon a journey, he never failed to admonish his superintendent, "Take care of my people, Smither—take care of my people; see that they are comfortable and have the best it is possible to give them."

He could not tolerate the sort of man who amasses a fortune, calls himself successful, and retires to bask in the light of past performance. When something was finished, he crossed it off his chart and went on with the next thing. And when he died his chart was richer in its list of things to do than at any time before in his life.

In the early part of 1923 he complained of not feeling well. Then came a day when he no longer went to the Store. His office was vacant. His friends were worried. A severe nervous breakdown, said his physicians; and ordered complete rest and quiet.

April gave way to May, and he seemed to be getting better. He was out in his beloved gardens once more. Then suddenly, a chill. Pneumonia! In four swift days, it was all over.

Arthur Letts was dead! He had reached the end of the trail.

In the early hours of the morning, on the eighteenth day of May, the Great Creator beckoned and called him within the confines of the Inner Temple, there to sit at the right hand of God.

Just one leap into the dark, and then the light—"the light that never was on land or sea."

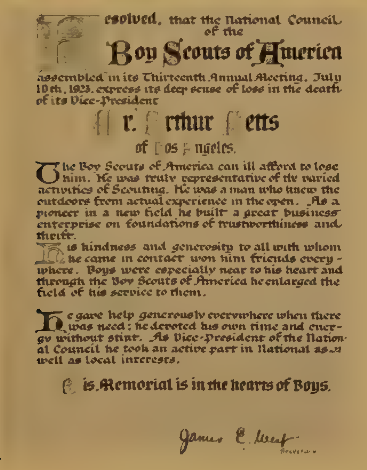
This thing that we call death is a cruel thing. It is a robber. But we could not believe that it would come like a thief in the night and carry away the best friend we ever had—and, probably, ever will have.

"And the stately ships go by
To their haven under the hill—
But oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

Out of respect to his memory, all the great mechanism which he had builded was stopped. Hundreds of would-be customers, yet ignorant of the event, approached the

THE END OF THE TRAIL

An antique bronze, executed by Tiffany for Arthur Letts—his favorite work of art



Resolved, that the National Council of the

Boy Scouts of America

assembled in its Thirteenth Annual Meeting, July 10th, 1923, express its deep sense of loss in the death of its Vice-President

Mr. Arthur Letts

of Los Angeles.

The Boy Scouts of America can ill afford to lose him. He was truly representative of the varied activities of Scouting. He was a man who knew the outdoors from actual experience in the open. As a pioneer in a new field he built a great business enterprise on foundations of trustworthiness and thrift.

His kindness and generosity to all with whom he came in contact won him friends everywhere. Boys were especially near to his heart and through the Boy Scouts of America he enlarged the field of his service to them.

He gave help generously everywhere when there was need; he devoted his own time and energy without stint. As Vice-President of the National Council he took an active part in National as well as local interests.

His Memorial is in the hearts of Boys.

James E. West
Secretary

HIS LAST TESTIMONIAL

The Boy Scouts of America can ill afford to lose him—his memorial is in the hearts of Boys

doors and sought entrance, but, on learning the reason of the closed doors, turned away with a shock as if it were a personal friend that had passed away. Quickly the news spread throughout the city. "ARTHUR LETTS is dead!" Thus whispered the astonished people in shop, store, school, office, courthouse and club.

If anything was needed to show the reach of his fame and the strong hold of his friendship, the cablegrams, telegrams, letters, and newspaper articles upon his death would have done so. From great associations and organizations, from prominent citizens, from cabinet officers and humble individuals, and from foreign countries messages came, telling of the sorrow felt at the passing of Arthur Letts. Flags on civic buildings were placed at half mast; and fellow-merchants paid homage in advertisements and observance of the flag tribute.

At a meeting of the Drapers' Chamber of Commerce of the United Kingdom in far-away London, that great metropolis of Britain, from where, just forty years before, the unknown apprentice lad had embarked for the Land of Promise, the members of the Council stood in silence for one minute, after listening to many expressions of sympathy. From the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America came an illumined testimonial, expressing its deep sense of loss in the death of its Vice-President. "The Boys of America can ill afford to lose him," it said: "His Memorial is in the heart of Boys." The press of the world also paid tribute. The general thought was expressed by one editor who wrote:

"MERCHANT PRINCE, A PRINCELY MAN

"It is a part of Los Angeles itself that will be buried when the body of Arthur Letts is laid with honor in its last resting place. For more than a quarter of a century he had lived and labored in Los Angeles, contributing greatly to its growth. He was one of the foremost of that group of builders who transformed the overgrown village of the middle nineties into a city of metropolitan stature and ambition.

"It was given to Arthur Letts to sense the civic and business future that was attainable through endeavor, and his was the purpose and the power, the civic pride and civic loyalty, to attempt the realization of the visions. Where many others were content to dream, *he* was filled with the indomitable spirit of achievement. He transformed hope into resolution, desire into effort, thought into action.

"As year succeeded year, through the lean, dark periods that alternated with seasons of success, his faith increased and his courage strengthened. As his own fortunes grew with the growing fortunes of the city with which he had cast his lot, so ever more largely he gave his money and himself in service to the common good. If it be true that, setting out on that far journey we must all take, we carry with us only what we have given others, with what riches Arthur Letts fares forth upon his way.

"Rising from his lowly beginning, Arthur Letts became a merchant prince. The small brick buildings at the corner of Fourth and Broadway in which he housed his earliest Los Angeles business venture have given place on that same site to the stately mercantile palace familiar to the shoppers of today. His success as a business man, as the architect and builder of a mighty enterprise, is the parallel of the success that has attended the development of Los Angeles itself.

"In that business success he took a just and honorable pride, but he did not look upon it as the measure of achievement, or hold it as the single and sufficient object of ambition. Becoming a merchant prince, he became a princely man, implying by princeliness a noble and lofty generosity. He never forgot the struggles of his own youth, the undeserved adversities under which in his early manhood fate bent him without power to break his spirit. Therefore, he gave himself and his money without stint to whatever made for social betterment and enlargement of opportunity, notably for young men and women.

"Arthur Letts was a city builder and civic leader in a very true and a very great sense. There was no sound project having the progress and welfare of Los Angeles for its purpose to which he did not give his counsel and practical support. In that task his zeal made him foremost, but he did not permit such service to engross his labors, any more than he allowed his business to monopolize his thought.

"His heart went willingly out to the work of the welfare organizations. He knew neither creed nor class in his giving. This was a side of his many-featured life of which the community knew less than any other, but in such fulfillment of his ideal of social obligation, he found his deepest satisfaction.

"The vast business enterprise he founded and of which he died the master, will remain the superbly successful institution that it is. The city he loved and served so helpfully in its progress to greatness, long will feel the impetus he helped to give its growth. In a sense, city and business alike are among his monuments. As they gave to him, so he gave to them. The irreparable loss that is sustained, is in the death of Arthur Letts, the philanthropical, unselfish benefactor of his fellow men. When the generous heart was stilled that prompted that devotion, Los Angeles lost what never can be restored, and what it often, unavailingly, will lament through long years to come."

Our hearts were filled with pride at the messages of condolence and praise that poured in from all parts of the world; but all the pride in the universe could not hold back our tears as we accompanied Arthur Letts on his last ride through the winding drives of his beautiful Hollywood estate—those fairyland gardens he had created as a haven of rest in which to find quietude and inspiration. It seemed as though the stately trees, the rare shrubs and the beautiful flowers were calling for one last caress from those hands which had tended them with such loving care. But they were calling in vain. Never again would he who planted them be there to watch over them, to see that they were sheltered from the heat of the summer sun and protected from the chilling blasts when winter comes.

The home at Hollywood had been well-nigh submerged in the flowers sent by those who wished to honor his memory; and in the concourse were not only those whose places were high in the community—though all of these were there—but as many, or more, of the plain, kindly folk whose sorrow and regard came from knowledge of the plain, kindly quality of the man they mourned.

Always distinguished-looking, in death the features of Arthur Letts had taken on a dignity that was strikingly impressive. The coverlid of the casket was a bank of orchids—his favorites—and under that glorious shield the waxen face was impressively calm and content. The contest with life was over; the greatest adventure of all was in the making!

The Right Reverend Bishop Joseph Johnson, the head of this diocese of the Episcopal church, had conducted the eloquently simple ritual of that faith, the opening phrase of which is that eternal truth: "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord."

The lid of the luxurious bronze casket had been quietly dropped into place, burying the stilled form of this distinguished merchant prince beneath a blanket of orchids; and as the clock on Holmby tower tolled thrice—sounding the hour—the Master of Holmby House began his last journey alone.

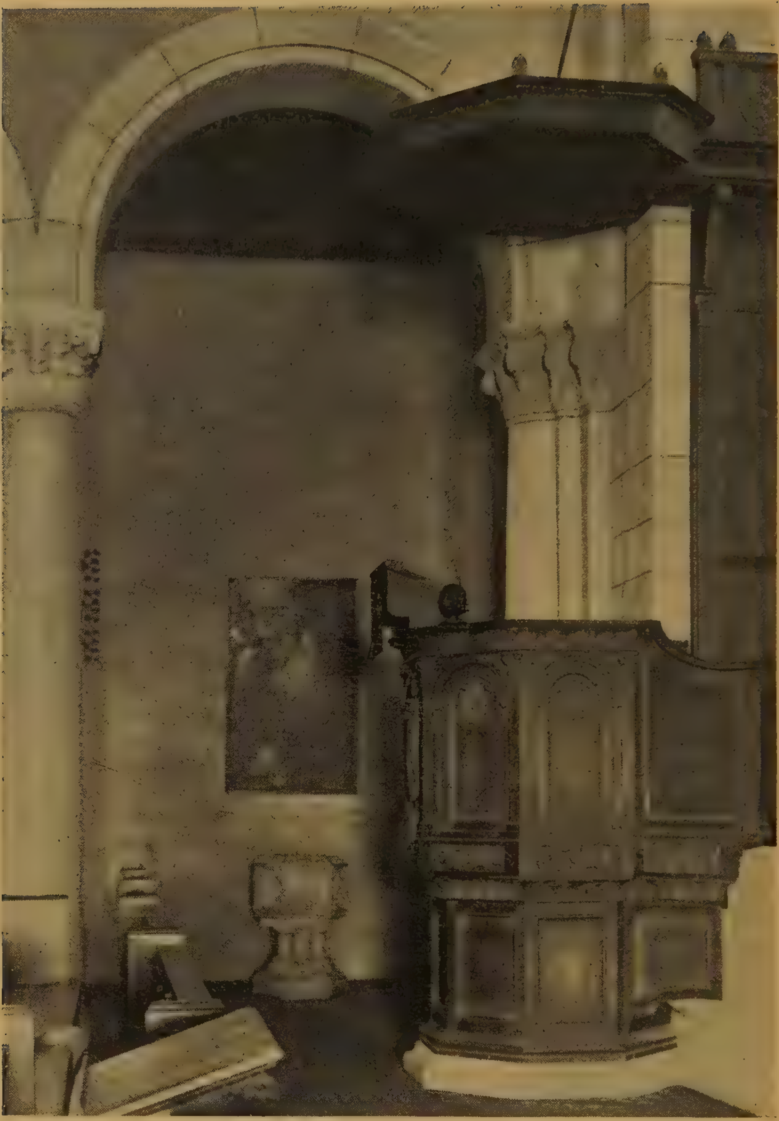
By the massive, wrought-iron gates through which we passed, two beautiful flags drooped listlessly at half mast. One was the banner of Old England, the land that gave him birth; the other was Old Glory, the emblem of the country of his adoption and to which he gave loving loyalty in unstinted measure.

It is to the honor of our human nature that we speak well of the dead; but the great crowds which lined the streets, and the long cortege which followed Arthur Letts from Holmby House to the grave, showed that he was understood while he lived, and that, whatever his faults and failures, his personal force, his acute business genius and his rugged integrity had seized upon the hearts and the imagination of the community.

When the bugles sounded "Taps"

The final journey—borne by his business associates

Farewell, Great-heart!



THE PULPIT OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL
Erected in memory of Arthur Letts by his children, Edna, Gladys and Arthur

But why tell it all over again?—of the multitude that thronged the cemetery, the companies of Boy Scouts drawn up on parade, and the long arch of drawn swords formed by the Knights Templar, under which his executives carried the flower-laden casket to its final resting-place. Were so many lovely flowers ever before gathered together in one spot? We doubt it. And who will ever forget the beautiful ritual of the Knights Templar?—those moments filled with emotion as the Prelate of the Order placed upon the bier Arthur Letts' sword of honor, and by the sword a cross, the two to remain as long as human time exists—emotion that could no longer be restrained as the Knights Templar and the Boy Scouts stood at salute and the bugles of the latter sounded "Taps," the plaintive notes of which must surely have been heard in Heaven.

In the beautiful casket of bronze, covered by a blanket of orchids and lilies of the valley from his children, and a pillow of roses from his grandchildren, with the sun slowly descending the western sky, and the lengthening shadows creeping silently over the green turf, we left him. Farewell!—Great heart!

Days will come and days will go, and by his resting-place near the silver lake the mocking birds and the orioles will fill the air with their song, but Arthur Letts may hear them not, for he is resting quietly in a better world than ours.

"Oft as the rolling seasons bring,
The hour of fate to those we love;
Each pearl that leaves the broken string,
Is set in friendship's crown above.

"As narrower grows the earthly chain,
The circle widens in the sky;
These are our treasures that remain,
But those are stars that beam on high."

THE END